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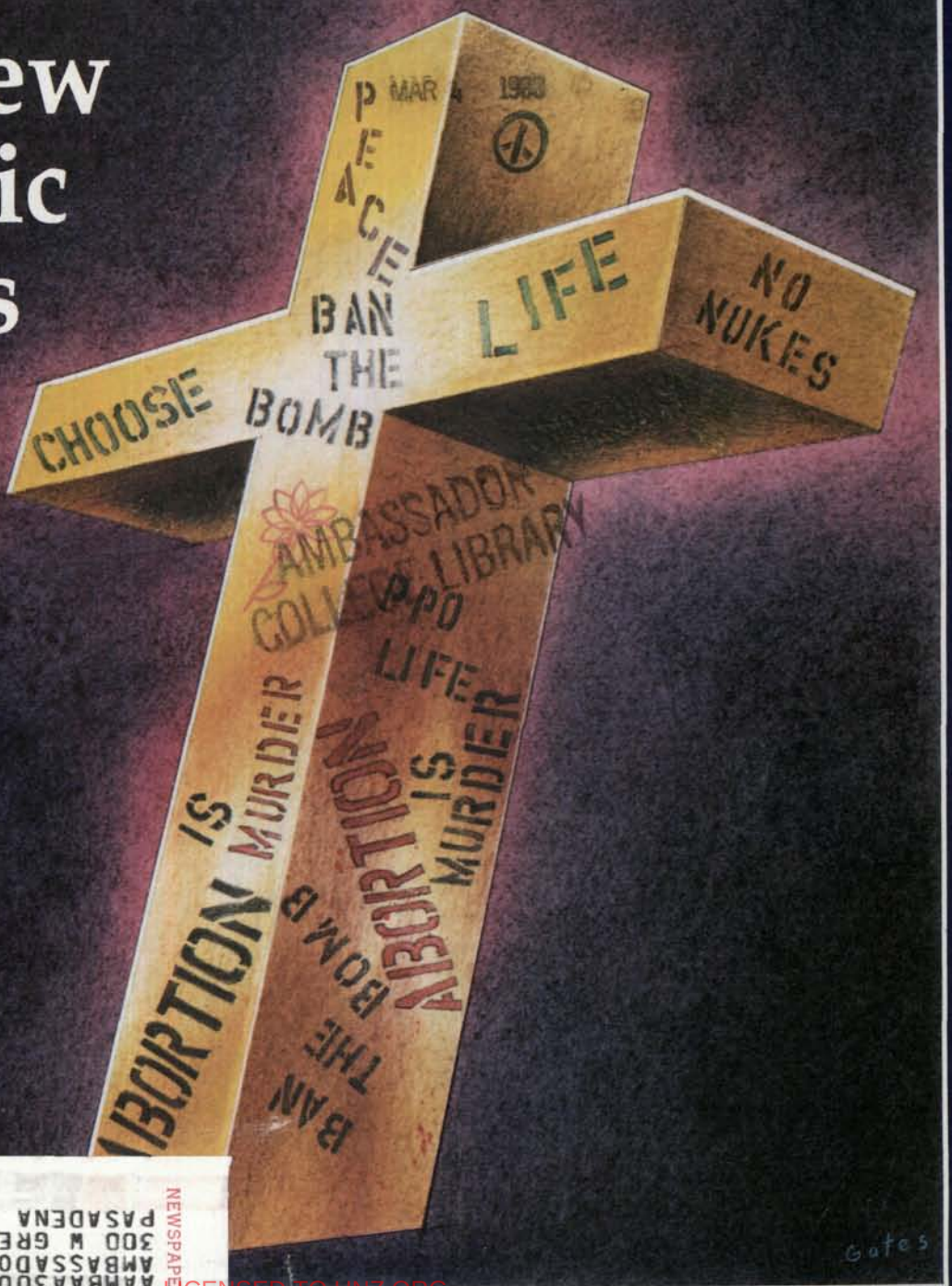
South Africa's White Liberals, by Thomas Nagel

Dennis Wrong: anti-Stalinism • Roger Shattuck: Modernism, a story

THE NEW REPUBLIC

The New Catholic Politics

by Patrick Glynn



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YURI SINCERELY

To the editors:
As an afterthought to Edward Jay Epstein's "The Andropov Hoax" (TNR, February 7), it is only fitting to add that in 1976, while living in Norway, I met a young Russian with K.G.B. contacts (who looked remarkably like a youngish Lenin and claimed to be descended from him) who claimed Andropov loved to peruse *Mad* magazine's "SPY vs SPY" yet he hated *Mad*'s "SPY vs SPY vs SPY" for the same reasons he disliked three-way chess. No joke.

CARL SCHMOLL
Springfield, Ohio

To the editors:
I have read Ed Epstein's pastiche of the press portraits of Andropov with some amusement but I think you got the title of the article wrong. It is not "The Andropov Hoax," but an old children's game called "Pinning the tail on the reporters."

Pretty soon I suppose Barbara or John or Walter or Dan will nab an exclusive interview in the Kremlin and will bring us the answer to the Big Question: Does Andy or does he not speak English?

If the answer is that he doesn't, I promise to write a mea culpa to TNR and buy Ed a modest lunch at Sardi's if he, in return, will promise me the same if it turns out that Andy does wing the lingo.

HARRISON E. SALISBURY
Taconic, Connecticut

THE 'VOICE' ON POLAND

To the editors:
As a former associate editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC I wish to correct the erroneous impression left by David Denby that the column I write in *The Village Voice* with Alexander Cockburn slighted Solidarity ("The Decline of *The Village Voice*," TNR, January 31). In fact, the column spoke to this issue on several different occasions, all in a most supportive fashion. One column enthusiastically contrasted Solidarity's bold objectives with the more limited perspectives of labor in the United States.

The major articles in the *Voice* on Israel are the joint work of Cockburn and myself. I personally support a homeland for the Palestinians and favor a ban on military aid to Israel until it gets out of Lebanon and quits the West Bank.

As for the predictability of *The Village Voice*, there surely is no event in American journalism today more certain than the position of TNR under its current owners on the subject of Israel.

JAMES RIDGEWAY
Washington, D.C.

David Denby replies:
My point about *Voice* coverage of Solidarity stands. The *Voice* assigned no one to cover the Polish crisis; nor did it print commentary from Polish writers. The column to which Mr. Ridgeway refers, published in the fall of 1980, made the point that Solidarity's program was more radical than anything proffered by American labor or acceptable to American corporations. Undoubtedly this is true, but it's a footnote at best, and it hardly amounts to a celebration of Solidarity in its own right.

HODGSON VS. CARO

To the editors:
Normally I read a book review and then determine if I wish to read the book that has been reviewed. In the case of Godfrey Hodgson's review of Robert Caro's *The Years of Lyndon Johnson* (TNR, February 7), I read the book first. Mr. Hodgson's review confirms what I have long suspected: that in the rush to complete a review, the author of the review does not carefully read the book in question. Or, if I am wrong in this case about Mr. Hodgson, he has apparently forgotten entire chapters of the Caro book.

Aside from questions of style, Mr. Hodgson neglects to give Mr. Caro any credit for mentioning redeeming qualities of the subject, Lyndon Johnson. This is just not so, for Johnson is credited with "being the best Congressman ever" time and again. Johnson is also credited with bringing electrical power to the Hill Country, despite many problems both in the political system and in the natural conservatism of the Hill Country people.

In addition, I believe Mr. Hodgson is wrong in his assessment of the story of Alice Glass and Lyndon Johnson. Mr. Caro is quite clear in his perception that Johnson was not acting in his ordinarily manipulative manner in regard to Alice Glass. Specifically, Mr. Caro mentions Johnson's ordinary habit of describing in detail his other, and later, liaisons. In the case of Alice Glass, Mr. Caro cannot find that Lyndon Johnson betrayed his affair with lurid accounts. Further, as Mr. Caro points out, the affair with Alice Glass certainly would have had no benefit for Johnson had it been discovered by Charles Marsh. The conclusion that I reached, and I believe that many others might also reach, is that Lyndon Johnson did act if moved by emotions other than "raw, manipulative action."

Finally, the reference to Uriah Heep was one quotation about Johnson, by one of Mr. Caro's sources. It was used in reference to Johnson's actions in one circumstance and was not, I think, a theme of the book.

DARWYN LUMLEY
Placentia, California

A DOCTOR ASKS

To the editors:
On the day following Presidential news conferences, why do all my psychotherapy patients associations drift to fears of impending nuclear holocaust?

R. B. LEVIN, M.D.
Ann Arbor, Michigan

CORRECTION

To the editors:
I regret to say that I made two errors in my article, "Boston's Busing Disaster" (TNR, February 28). John A. Volpe, not Endicott Peabody, was governor of Massachusetts when the statute was enacted that prohibited racial imbalances in public schools; and Mr. Peabody's mother was busted in St. Augustine, Florida, not Selma, Alabama.

GEORGE V. HIGGINS
Boston, Massachusetts

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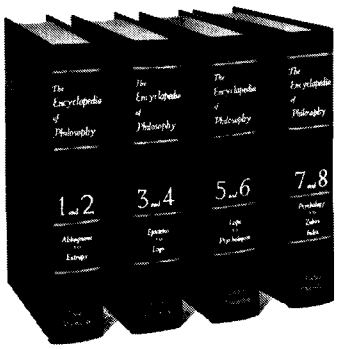

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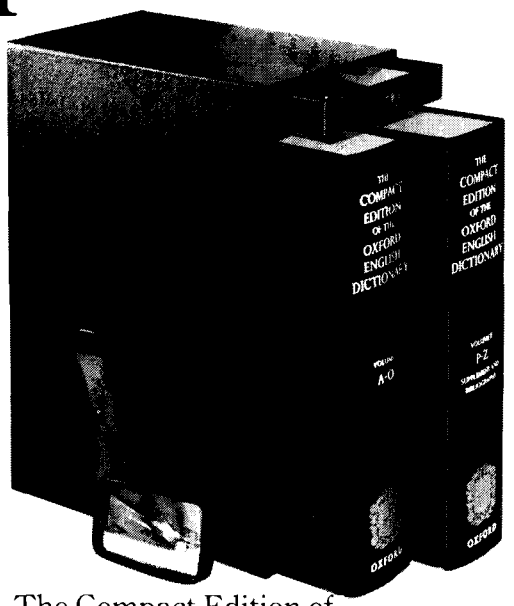

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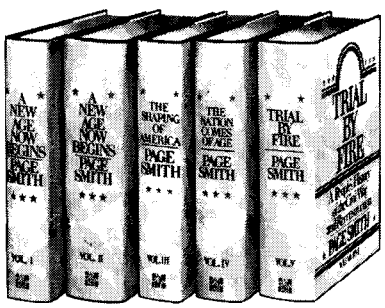

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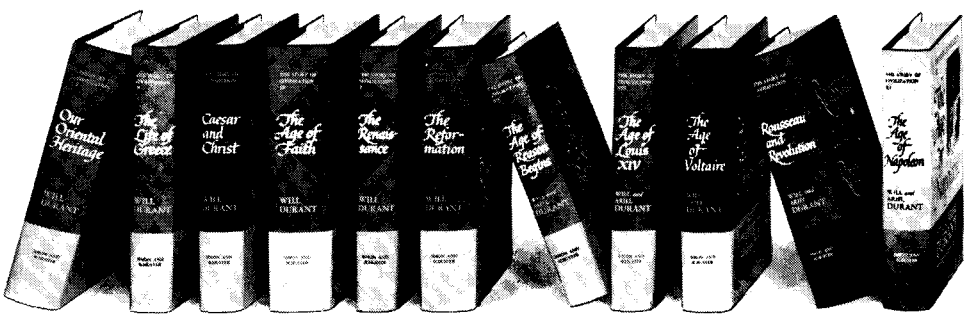

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Roosevelt's Revolution

Fifty years ago this week the United States began the most radical transformation of outlook since the Civil War. It was the inauguration on March 4, 1933, of Franklin Roosevelt in the fourth year of the Great Depression. I watched it and wrote about it. It was a time when being a young journalist in Washington was the most exciting job on earth.

The first thing, of course, was whether we were going to have a revolution, and what kind. Would it be moderate or violent? We were prepared for either. One worker in four was unemployed. The stock market had collapsed. Roger Babson on September 5, 1929, had said, "There is a crash coming and it may be a terrific one." Yes, he said, it might be a decline of 60 to 80 points on the Dow Jones average. (The average dropped from 381.17 in 1929 to 41.22 in 1932.) Farmers who had mortgaged farms to buy more land when wheat was $2 a bushel saw it drop to 40 cents, and faced foreclosure. But the angry neighbors intervened. They chased sheriffs away. On January 30, 1933, the New York Life Insurance Company, which owned farm mortgages with a face value of $200 million, capitulated: it announced that it was halting foreclosures. Other insurance companies followed suit.

Who was talking revolution? Why, everybody. There had been a revolution in Italy. What amounted to a revolution was beginning in January 1933 in Germany (a man named Hitler, with a moustache). Senator Bilbo of Mississippi said in late 1931, "Folks are getting restless. Communism is gaining a foothold. Right here in Mississippi some people are about ready to head a mob. I'm getting a little pink myself." Representative Hamilton Fish, a die-hard conservative, declared, "If we don't have [security] under the existing system, the people will change the system." Senator David A. Reed, Republican of Pennsylvania, aired doubts: "I do not often envy other people their governments," he said. "But I say that if this country ever needed a Mussolini it needs one now."

THE NEW REPUBLIC's Malcolm Cowley noted in his splendid reminiscence, *"The Dream of the Golden Mountains* (Penguin, 1980), the murmurs for a Presidential dictatorship under martial law. He quotes Al Smith in February 1933 as saying that the Depression is a greater crisis than the World War: "And what does a democracy do in war?" he asked. "It becomes a tyrant, a despot, a real monarch. In the World War we took our Constitution, wrapped it up, and laid it on the shelf and left it there until it was over." Finally Rexford Tugwell of the Brain Trust recalled in one of his memoirs that during the spring of 1933 the Army felt that the time was approaching when it might have to "take over."

What was President Hoover doing through all of this? I remember him well. As Secretary of Commerce in the old 19th Street building he responded to reporters' questions with a greater knowledge of the government than anybody else in Washington. I believed he would be a great President. Then, like a Greek hero hated by the gods, he was struck down by malign forces of which he had no understanding. He told the country after the Crash, "The fundamental strength of the nation's economy is unimpaired." Nine days later the Bank of the United States collapsed, the worst bank failure in American history.

When he campaigned he noted that "We have not reached the goal, but, given a chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, we shall soon, with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation." The stock market hailed his election. The only trouble was that the workers and farmers were not getting adequate return to take the goods they produced off the market. Concentration of corporate power was extraordinary. Wall Street ran Washington. In 1933, 594 corporations owned 53 percent of all corporate wealth; the other 47 percent was shared among 387,970. And the Cabinet made Hoover look like a liberal. Treasury Secretary Mellon, for example, wanted the slump to cure itself. It would, in time, he said; it always did. He would "liquidate labor, liquidate stocks, liquidate the farmer, liquidate real estate—people will work harder, live a more moral life. Values will be adjusted and enterprising people will pick up the wrecks from less competent people."

There was revolution abroad. Why wouldn't it come at home? The fact is, Hoover had stopped governing. There was Stalin in Russia, Mussolini in Italy, Hitler in Germany, and now in the Pacific Japan had invaded China. When admonished by an international commission, Japan announced that it was leaving the League of Nations. That was the end of another dream to which Wilson had led the young people (and put this particular youth into a uniform) in a war that was supposed to "make the world safe for democracy." There were no peace dreams anymore. It was all a fraud.

But who was this man waiting in Hyde Park to take over the White House? It was the last time that the Constitution permitted a four-month lame duck session, from November to March 4. And the banks began to fail. Unskilled workers at the Briggs Body plant at Detroit had little to deposit (they earned 10 cents an hour). The banking structure in Detroit was about to collapse anyway. Governor Comstock called a "bank holiday." On February 28, "holidays" were proclaimed in another five states, on March 1 three more, and so on. On Thursday, March 2, F.D.R. came to Washington, and the next day conferred with Hoover. Maybe he should have been more yielding. "We are at the end of our string," Hoover told him gloomily at midnight. "There is nothing more we can do." But Hoover confided to a friend that he had proposed pledges that would have meant "the abandonment of 90 percent of the so-called new deal." F.D.R. said no.

Supported by braces and propped against the lectern, Roosevelt told the people, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." His voice was vibrant, confident. In one of the most thrilling moments in modern history, his power and personality prevailed. The bank runs ended.

But note this. You can't read that inaugural fifty years later without seeing that we were close to extra-Constitutional government. If necessary, the President said specifically, "I shall ask Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis: broad executive power to wage a war against the emergency as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe. . . ."

We were as close to it as that.

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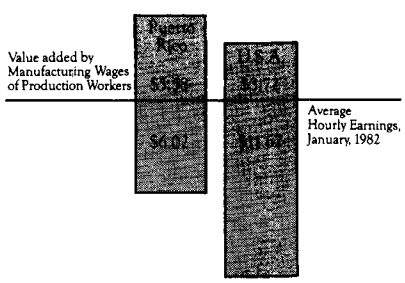

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
MARCH 14, 1983

THE FILTHINESS ISSUE

Asked at his press conference on February 16 about the furor over Anne M. Gorsuch and the Environmental Protection Agency, President Reagan launched into a rambling review of the history and purposes of the Superfund, the program to clean up hazardous wastes that is at the center of the dispute. Mr. Reagan was in his kindly uncle mode, so when he said that "certainly" he retains confidence in E.P.A. and its administrator, and added that they had compiled a "splendid record," his audience must have thought that here was another case in which our affable President has been caught unaware by troubles in some backwater of his empire. Listening citizens could be forgiven for assuming that Mr. Reagan was just giving a pro forma vote of confidence to subordinates while he tries to get to the bottom of all this. The President promised his television audience (or seemed to) that he was ready to cooperate fully with Congressional investigators in the interest of truth and justice, "because I can no longer insist on executive privilege if there's a suspicion in the minds of the people that maybe it is being used to cover some wrongdoing. That we will never stand for."

The next day, after the television cameras were gone, a White House spokesman issued the by-now customary post-press-conference clarification. Executive privilege hadn't been dropped after all; the terms under which Congressional committees may examine E.P.A. documents to determine whether or not the Superfund was being administered politically (and perhaps corruptly) were still to be negotiated. But again, the confused signals left the convenient impression that the President was somehow detached from the E.P.A. issue. He hardly seemed to understand what was coming out of his own mouth, let alone what chemicals might be seeping into the nation's groundwater. If the President only knew, surely he would do something, wouldn't he?

We are all too old for this. Just as Richard Nixon knew that his people were busy with burglaries and cover-ups, Ronald Reagan knows that the environmental laws of this country are being administered by people who are fundamentally hostile to the intent of those laws. After all, he appointed them. He approved the slashed budgets under which they operate. And he established the climate of bias in favor of polluting industries and the contempt for environmentalism that pervades the Administration.

During the 1980 campaign, Mr. Reagan regularly disparaged "environmental extremists," charging that they would rather "protect rabbit holes and birds' nests" than see industries built and jobs created. Possibly there were occasional cases in which environmental regulators established such restrictive standards as to make it impossible for businesses to operate. Presumably some regulators did overlook costs in their eagerness to achieve benefits. But instead of appointing moderate conservatives to run the environmental agencies, people who would scale back onerous regulatory burdens and weigh costs against benefits while upholding the fundamental goal of environmental protection, Mr. Reagan chose extremists of his own—James G. Watt, head of the notoriously anti-environmentalist Mountain States Legal Foundation, as Secretary of the Interior, and Anne M. Gorsuch, Mr. Watt's frequent ally in the Colorado legislature, as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Of the two, Mrs. Gorsuch was tendered the more

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crucial responsibility. Important as public lands, wilderness areas, and mineral rights are to the nation's spirit and economy, E.P.A.'s very purpose is the protection of the lives and health of America's people. It is charged with ensuring the survival not of the snail darter but of human beings who suffer the consequences of poisoned air and tainted water. They suffer by contracting cancer and emphysema, by being unable to work and becoming dependent, by feeling physical and emotional pain because they or their loved ones are made to fall sick.

The kinds of people who tend to be appointed to high government posts in any Administration are unlikely to have shared the experience of people who find themselves and their neighbors ill or dying because they happen to live near a Love Canal or a Times Beach, Missouri. But past Administrations of both parties (E.P.A. was founded, after all, during the Nixon Administration) have cared enough about the lives of such people to see to it that environmental laws were fairly and energetically enforced. The benefits have been tangible—and breathable and drinkable, too.

BUT A DRASTIC REVERSAL of policy came into effect with the arrival of Mr. Reagan and Mrs. Gorsuch. The Administration tried to have environmental standards lowered by law, but Congress—including the Republican Senate—refused to go along. And so the Administration decided to gut environmental protection by subterfuge—by slashing funds, destroying agency morale, and refusing to enforce the law. Because of new laws to control toxic chemicals, E.P.A.'s workload was scheduled to double during the Reagan years, but the Reagan budgets call for the agency's operating funds to be cut nearly in half from the levels projected by the Carter Administration. Mrs. Gorsuch has claimed that the E.P.A. staff is down by "only" one thousand since the Administration came into office, though environmental groups claim that, using Carter budget projections, nearly three thousand positions have been eliminated. According to President Carter's former deputy E.P.A. administrator, William Drayton, "E.P.A. is losing the cream of its senior civil service—the core of key people with the expertise, wisdom, and respect that are critical to any large institution." According to Russell Train, E.P.A. administrator under Presidents Nixon and Ford, "The budget and personnel cuts, unless reversed, will destroy the agency as an effective institution for many years to come."

Along with budget and personnel levels, E.P.A. enforcement activities have declined dramatically. From 1980 to 1981, the number of cases referred by E.P.A. to the Justice Department dropped from 252 to 78, and Justice filed suit in only 35 cases. One of Mrs. Gorsuch's arguments has been that states could take up the enforcement burden, but last year the Administration proposed a 20 percent cut in funding for state environmental grants, and has announced its intention to "zero-out" such grants completely.

Every day there is mounting evidence that when President Reagan's E.P.A. *has* moved to enforce the laws, it has done so grudgingly and with bias toward corporate polluters. The legislation setting up the $1.6-billion Superfund provides that the E.P.A. will endeavor to collect cleanup costs from chemical companies responsible for hazardous waste pollution. In the very first Superfund settlement, Mrs. Gorsuch's assistant has admitted telling the Inmont Corporation what the government's bottom-line negotiating position was. Congress is currently investigating charges that E.P.A. has pursued a "sweetheart" policy of charging big chemical companies only what it costs to do a superficial cleanup of waste dumps, leaving it to taxpayers (if anyone) to pay for a thorough detoxification.

There is a special kind of horror in the experience of families who live in places like Love Canal or Times Beach, where contamination by the deadly poison dioxin reached three hundred times the level at which danger begins. Their pets fall ill, then their children; they begin to complain, but it is months or even years before anyone listens, let alone acts. And the fear can never be fully assuaged, because the diseases caused by exposure to chemicals like dioxin can take many years to become manifest.

Yet in 1982 Mrs. Gorsuch lifted a ban on dumping liquid chemicals in hazardous waste landfills. That enabled Chemical Waste Management Inc. to unload 1,500 barrels of flammable solvents in a Denver dump. This company is represented by James W. Sanderson, one of Mrs. Gorsuch's close associates, whom she had wanted to make the third-ranking official at E.P.A. In another case, Congressional staffers strongly suspect that Mrs. Gorsuch held up a $6.1 million grant to clean up a California toxic waste dump so that Democratic Governor Jerry Brown could not claim credit for the cleanup in his campaign for the Senate. In yet another case, when the Thriftway Company, of Farmington, New Mexico, sought a waiver from laws limiting lead in gasoline, Mrs. Gorsuch is quoted as having said to a Senate aide that she couldn't tell company representatives to break the law, "but she hoped that they got the message." To help administer the Superfund, Mrs. Gorsuch hired Rita M. Lavelle, public affairs specialist for Aero Jet Liquid Rocket, a company that E.P.A. records showed had the third worst pollution record in California. Mrs. Lavelle has been fired in what Congressional investigators suspect was an attempt to calm the furor over the E.P.A.

NOW THE ADMINISTRATION has announced with a flourish that it is willing to spend $33 million in Superfund money to buy out the 2,400 residents of Times Beach. This action comes unconscionably late—the government has known of the danger for a decade—yet it has all the earmarks of political panic. It may not be enough; Mrs. Gorsuch may yet have to be sacrificed. Although President Reagan has declared he retains confidence in her, White House aides know that

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she is a political liability, symbol of a potentially devastating "filthiness issue" that will parallel the Democrats' potent "fairness issue" created by tax cuts skewed to the rich and spending cuts skewed to the poor. But Mrs. Gorsuch is only a symbol, and getting rid of her will not change the fact that President Reagan and his environmental policies have been biased toward the same wealthy and powerful groups that were the beneficiaries of his tax policies, and against the same people forced by chance or Reagan economic policy to need food stamps and compensatory education.

Last week, at the height of the controversy, Mrs. Gorsuch got married. This is a traditionalist Administration, so henceforth Anne Gorsuch is to be known as Anne Burford. We wish her well in her personal, if not her professional, life. But what really needs changing is not the name of the environmental protection administrator, but the policies of the man who appointed her.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL has decided again to reject, and reject, and reject. Not even the Palestinian debacle in Beirut persuaded the leaders of this tormented people that realism is required when the hour is late. At a meeting in Algiers the Council declared that the Reagan plan is unacceptable and that King Hussein cannot speak for the Palestinians. The reason given was the unity of the movement. (In 1947 the Zionist movement chose partition over unity, which is how the Jews got a state.) Perhaps the most ominous proof that the Palestinian leadership is derelict in its duty was Yasir Arafat's refusal to allow Issam Sartawi to speak. Dr. Sartawi is the most influential moderate in the Palestinian community, a brave man who has been telling the truth to his people for years about the need to live with the fact of Israel. Now, in the wake of the P.L.O.'s defeat, in the middle of Ariel Sharon's grab of the West Bank, the "moderate" Mr. Arafat muzzles him. Again Dr. Sartawi told the truth: "It was outrageous that all of the secretary generals of the different P.L.O. organizations painted a picture of Lebanon as a glowing victory. Lebanon was a disaster. . . . If Beirut was such a great victory, then all we need is a series of such victories and we will be holding our next national council in Fiji." Then he resigned from the Council. (Whom will the P.L.O.'s apologists point to now?) Meanwhile the rest of the cast play their parts. The media—even Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times*—refers to Algiers as a "compromise." The compromise, presumably, was between those who were willing to say that they would not recognize Israel and those who were not willing to say it. And the Reagan Administration insists that only Israel is the problem in Lebanon. The President offers Israel a "guarantee" of its northern border after "the complete withdrawal" of its army, which is to say, the progress he could not get from the Arabs he will now press to get from the Israelis. The President hopes to make up in Jerusalem what he lost in Algiers.

□ WE HAPPILY WELCOME a new contributing editor this week: Maggie Scarf, a writing instructor at Yale University and author of *Body, Mind, & Behavior* (Dell) and *Unfinished Business: Pressure Points in the Lives of Women* (Ballantine).

□ THIRTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "George Orwell is an extremely English writer. He is a man with a grouse. He holds forth about his grievances—the intelligentsia, the rich, the Stalinists, nationalists of every kind. He has simple views about matters which more learned men have not been decided about: for example, he thinks that God and belief in immortality are nonsense. The views of nearly everyone except himself, especially those of writers who are religious, he seems to attribute to a desire to be fashionable, if not to bad faith. All the same, he is real and has a real point of view. The strength of his position as against most of his intellectual opponents is that they have been irresponsible, even if they have not actually betrayed our freedoms; whereas he has practised what he preached. He is a social democrat who has fought for his beliefs and voluntarily lived like a poor man. More than this he cares simply and passionately for intellectual freedom. His real grievance against his fellow writers is that they have not paid the price of freedom." (Review of Orwell's *Such, Such Were the Joys*, by Stephen Spender, March 16, 1953.)

'Socialism' in one New England town.

BERNIE OF BURLINGTON

Burlington, Vermont

IS IT FOR this that Eugene Debs went to jail, that Norman Thomas suffered the blows of Frank Hague's thugs, and that Michael Harrington labored on behalf of "the other America"? So that Bernie Sanders could worry about potholes in the streets of Burlington? Surely not. Still, these are the facts. Bernard Sanders is the only Socialist head of government in America, and he is very concerned about potholes, not to mention other crucial elements of the proletarian revolution: property tax rates, police salaries, insurance premiums, and interest on the city's bank account.

Sanders is the Mayor of Burlington, which has a little under 38,000 people but is the largest city in Vermont. To be sure, he is not the only Socialist public official in the country. Two Congressmen, Ron Dellums of Califor-

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nia and John Conyers of Michigan, are members of Democratic Socialists of America, as are many state legislators and some county board members. But none of them runs a government.

So how much has Sanders radicalized Burlington, beyond putting copies of *The Militant* next to issues of *Government Executive* in the Mayor's office? Not very much. In fact, his Socialism is hardly the most important aspect of his administration. Both his accomplishments and his problems stem more from his aggressive, sometimes contentious manner than from his ideology. "Bernie's a pretty good Mayor," said one resident. "But he's a real confrontationist, and that's going to catch up with him one day." To which Sanders replies, "to be cooperative means to be co-opted. If I don't do anything, what the hell was I elected for?"

Sanders did not win his narrow victory in March 1981 by saying he would municipalize the banks, expropriate the homes of the wealthy, or disarm the police. He didn't even propose opening the Lake Champlain shoreline to the public. What he did was, he said he would raise property taxes less than the incumbent. It worked. The voters overwhelmingly turned down Mayor Gordon Paquette's proposed 65 cent (per $100 of assessed value) tax increase. Sanders said 25 cents would be enough, and the voters bought it.

Sanders is in the small but sturdy tradition of Socialist mayors who have won and held office by tweaking the establishment, holding down taxes, and keeping the roads paved. This kind of conservative populism was used by Frank Zeidler in Milwaukee and Jaspar McLevy in Bridgeport, Connecticut. They kept getting elected simply because they seemed more competent than their opponents. So does Sanders. "We're running a more businesslike operation here," he says, and no one, comparing him to his predecessor, argues with that.

Sanders still benefits from the political mistakes of the preceding regime, a Democratic machine that had held power for thirty years and ran the city like a private club. Members—Democratic loyalists and their friends and relatives—could even get low-interest mortgages from the city cemetery fund. Citizens with no special clout never knew about the fund or its loans.

SANDERS DID AWAY with all that. He's a 41-year-old man with a manner at once brusque and gentle, and a pure Flatbush accent. He replaced the politically well-connected accountants who had run the city treasury with people who were experienced in public finance. He started free health clinics for women and old people. And he created a city arts council that produces free concerts in Burlington's Battery Park. "You could say, 'What is Socialist about any of that?'" Sanders said. "O.K., nothing, really. I agree. But we have done some things that the best of liberals will not do."

What this boils down to, by Sanders's own account, is setting up a labor-management committee, giving 9 percent pay increases to the unionized city workers and only 7.5 percent to their higher salaried supervisors, and even taking budget proposals to the workers. "We're getting the workers involved in the day-to-day management," Sanders said. "These guys have worked here for years. They said, 'You can cut here, you can cut there.' They know."

All this goes over pretty well with most Burlington voters, in part because it enrages the remnants of the old machine Sanders replaced. When he first took office, the Democrats were so upset that the city council rejected all of his appointments without even checking to see if they were qualified. With enemies like that, Sanders hardly needed friends. The city's sole daily newspaper, *The Free Press*, owned by the very un-Socialist Gannett chain, scolded the Democratic aldermen for "denying [Sanders] a fair chance to exercise his leadership." The Democrats, the newspaper said, "will bear the blame for any chaos that might follow." And so they did. In the midterm election last year, Sanders supporters won three of seven contested seats, and the Republicans won two. The Democrats won one contest, barely, and five of the thirteen aldermen are now Sanders supporters.

THE DEMOCRATS like to grumble that they have lost ground because of "the new people," sometimes called the "hipboisie," the granola-chewing exemplars of backpack chic who have come here for the university and the mountains. This interpretation pictures Sanders and his minions as elitists, and allows the Democrats to claim that the working folks are still on their side. But the election results do not support this view of Sanders. He and his backers took the working-class wards too. And an unscientific but probably representative survey in the Steer and Stein Pub and Restaurant on the corner of North and Winooski gave Sanders the unanimous support of the eight imbibers one recent evening. "I think he's doing a good job," said a 38-year-old barber named Jim Byrd. "He's cleaned out the dirt."

Sanders has neither working-class nor Socialist roots. He comes out of Vermont's vaguely leftish, antimilitary Liberty Union Party, which he left in 1977, later joining Barry Commoner's Citizens Party. His radicalism is based more on dissatisfaction with what is than on a vision of what ought to be. He is fond of saying things such as, "We say over and over again that nothing will really improve until there's a national redistribution of priorities."

Still, it isn't likely that they care too much about all that at the Steer and Stein and environs. They do care that Sanders has proposed lowering the property tax rate. They are also happy that, in the time-honored tradition of mayors facing an election, Sanders just "discovered" an additional $1.9 million in city funds that had previously been unknown. Politically, this is a convenient thing to do just before an election. Fiscally, it may not be so convenient. By Sanders's own admission, the city is desperately short of revenue in the long run, and according to the way state law is generally inter-

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preted, the property tax is the only local revenue source.

Sanders does not interpret the law that way. He calls the property tax "regressive," and has proposed a 3 percent gross receipts tax on hotel bills and restaurant meals. There is some question about whether the city can legally impose this tax, and the proposal so enraged the business establishment that it went out and hired a California consultant firm to fight it—which only added to Sanders's anti-establishment appeal.

All this makes Sanders a slight favorite to beat Democrat Judith Stephany and Republican James Gilson in the March 1 election. The Democrats, though, have reasonable hopes of forcing Sanders into a runoff, where they think they can beat him. They have a good candidate in Stephany, a 37-year-old liberal with no ties to the old Paquette machine. She takes the race seriously enough to have quit as minority leader of the State House of Representatives to run against Sanders.

If Sanders wins, some of his supporters want him to run for the U.S. Senate, and he has not discouraged their talk. The next available Senate seat in Vermont will be Democrat Patrick Leahy's in 1986. It is extraordinarily unlikely that Sanders could get elected statewide, but by running as a left-of-center independent he could conceivably deliver the seat to a Republican. In the kind of radical politics Sanders pursues, this result would be no worse than the election of another Democrat.

But Sanders, even if re-elected, probably will not have much impact outside Burlington. He disdains what little nationwide Socialist movement there is (the Democratic Socialists of America) for its gradualist philosophy and its ties to the Democratic Party. He prefers to make the revolution in one city, fill the potholes, and keep the tax rate down. All this may not be what Debs and Thomas had in mind. But then, they never got elected.

JON MARGOLIS

Jon Margolis is a Washington correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*.

In a time of doubt, the Church turns to the Social Gospel.

PULPIT POLITICS

BY PATRICK GLYNN

WHATEVER its consequences for the nation as a whole, the debate over nuclear arms has become a curiously pivotal event for the Roman Catholic Church. Not since *Humanae Vitae*—the papal encyclical prohibiting artificial contraception for Catholics—has an official Church pronouncement stirred as much attention as the bishops' draft pastoral letter on nuclear war. But whereas the effect of *Humanae Vitae* in 1968 was to shatter the morale of the American Church and undermine the authority of the bishops, the current pastoral message is having the opposite result. Clergy at all levels have been galvanized by the antinuclear theme, and, dissent from the right notwithstanding, the bishops are growing accustomed to the warmest praise from quarters that formerly proffered only criticism and scorn.

Yet to see the pastoral letter solely as the product of Church doctrine or even of the bishops' strong personal convictions would be misleading. Behind the hierarchy's bold new stance on disarmament lies a series of institutional changes that over the past fifteen years have thrust politics more and more to the center of Catholic life. The period since Pope Paul VI's pronouncement on birth control has been marked by self-doubt and severe dissension within the Church. Since 1966 the American Church has lost over 11,000 priests and 35,000 sisters through resignations; weekly Mass attendance has dropped precipitously; and roughly four-fifths of American Catholics, according to polls taken by the National Opinion Research Center, have found themselves at odds with the Vatican on the birth control question. Again and again, in the Catholic press and at public meetings, clergy and lay Catholics have clashed bitterly with the bishops on the issues of contraception, abortion, divorce, the marriage of priests, and the ordination of women. The revisions of canon law recently signed by the Pope have done nothing to alter the fundamental terms of this debate.

At the same time, there has been an enormous growth in the portion of the Church's institutional resources devoted to the concerns of social justice. Much of it dates from 1967, the year before *Humanae Vitae*, when Pope Paul issued his encyclical on third world development. In its own way the 1967 document, *Populorum Progressio*, was nearly as controversial as *Humanae Vitae*. It

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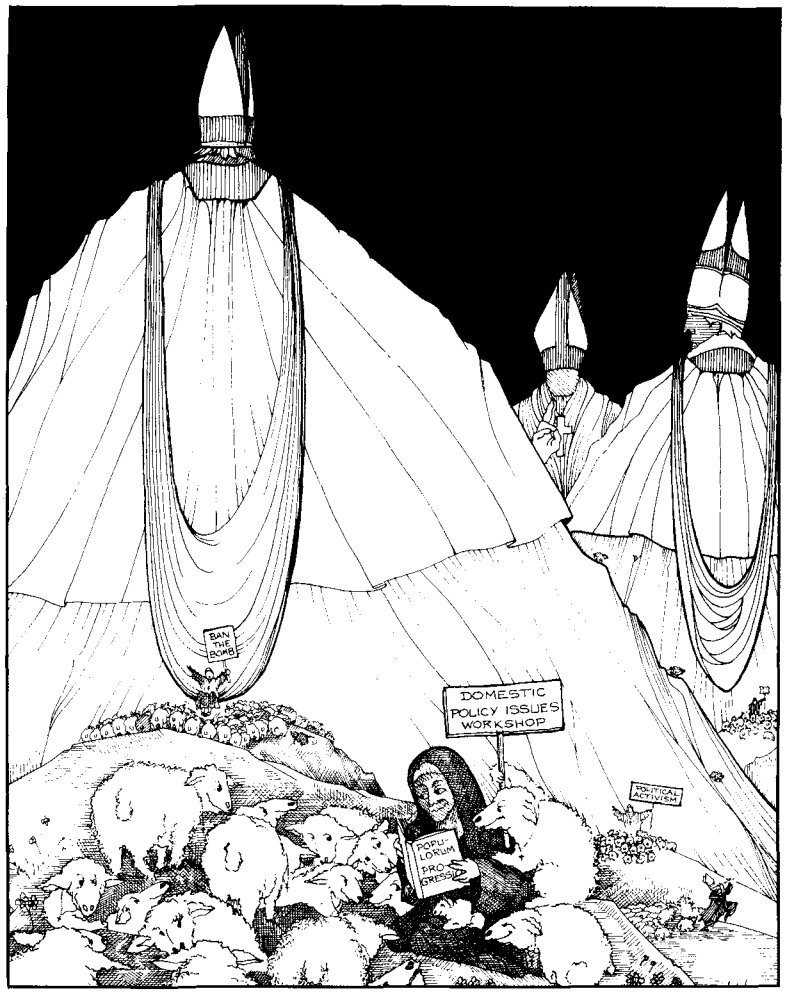
chastised the wealthier nations for indifference to the poorer, and blamed third world poverty on Western exploitation. It was attacked vociferously by the American right. *Populorum Progressio* culminated a series of encyclicals and council documents—Pope John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963), and Vatican Council II's *Gaudium et Spes* (1965)—in which the Vatican set forth a new political teaching whose themes mirrored the mood of the era: a more conciliatory attitude toward Communism, a new emphasis on peace and disarmament, a special sympathy for the third world. To advance these interests, Paul established a Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace to oversee the development of Church social doctrine.

In a sense, Paul's contrasting encyclicals on birth control and on the problems of developing nations have defined two poles in American Catholic life since the late 1960s: the one a source of dissension and decay, the other a stimulus to energetic growth. At the same time that parish institutions have withered and local churches and parochial schools have experienced religious staff shortages, the Church bureaucracy devoted to the promotion of peace and justice has dramatically expanded. Altogether there has been an enormous redirection of religious energy into the secular realm, particularly on the part of the clergy. For many clerics shaken by the changes of the Council era, politics has provided what the Catholic social scientist Russell Barta calls "a new apologetic"—a new message with which to rouse the faithful and vindicate the Church in the modern world.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Hundreds of clerics and Church officials are now professionally involved in Church-sponsored social activism. Over the last ten years, about 90 percent of the nation's Catholic religious orders and 60 percent of its 173 dioceses and archdioceses have established "peace and justice commissions" of their own. Twenty years ago such political involvement on the part of official Church personnel would have been inconceivable, except in connection with matters such as federal aid to parochial schools, where the interests of the Church were directly at stake. To the degree that there was an identifiably Catholic tradition of political activism—the Catholic Worker movement, the liberal Catholic movement in Chicago—it was initiated and sustained by lay people, with only rare (and usually tacit) support from certain hierarchs. Activism generally occurred outside the official Church bureaucracy; it existed as a minor countercurrent to the public stance of the Church, which, because of its strong anti-Communist emphasis, was generally seen as conservative. Not that the bishops were always conservative or silent on political issues; in 1919 Catholic prelates outlined a social program calling for child labor laws, higher wages, social insurance, and similar reforms, and throughout the twentieth century the hierarchy remained supportive of unionism. But if these positions never registered very strongly in the public mind, it was partly because statements from the bishops on politics in any form were so infrequent.

Nowadays, by contrast, it has become routine for a Catholic diocese to take public stands and even lobby on a whole range of domestic and foreign policy issues—everything from local concerns, such as housing and rent control, to national questions, such as U.S. aid to El Salvador and nuclear disarmament. The more active diocesan commissions employ full-time activists—as many as six to eight professionals—who organize letter-writing campaigns, visit members of Congress and state legislators, sponsor demonstrations, and instruct local Catholics on the issues. San Francisco's diocesan commission, one of the most active, has a full-time staff of six and a budget this year of $150,000—45 percent from diocesan sources and much of the rest from supporters of California's nuclear freeze campaign.

In short, after two decades of change and inner tu-

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mult, it is the Church's politically oriented institutions that have emerged the most vital and unscathed. The resulting structural incentives have operated powerfully on the bishops, since to speak on such matters as birth control and priestly celibacy has been to risk a torrent of abuse. In the attempt to gain the ear of clergy and laity alike, it has proved infinitely more gratifying and productive to turn to political themes.

The Catholic bishops—once a conservative and generally sober lot—now find themselves willy-nilly in the vanguard of half a dozen political movements. Since 1966, when they created the United States Catholic Conference and hired a staff of policy analysts to grapple officially with the secular realm, the bishops have issued countless declarations on public policy topics: pastoral letters, statements to the press, Congressional testimony, lengthy policy analyses. These documents make for curious reading, mixing a rather standard brew of secular left-liberalism with the lofty moral rhetoric of revealed religion: "The Church has a particular responsibility to address the moral questions involved in the issue of strip-mining." Or again: "As an advocate, the Church should analyze housing needs in light of the Gospel, make judgments and offer suggestions." It requires perhaps more than an average grasp of religious matters to discover what the Gospel has to say about housing needs, but such, nonetheless, is the perspective that the bishops offer. They are not above using their formidable moral authority to drive home a narrowly political point. Thus a plan of national health insurance is urged upon us as a "moral necessity"; and with a confidence reserved for Galbraithian economists and Catholic prelates, the bishops assure the nation that there is no necessary trade-off between inflation and unemployment. At times the Church seems to be particularly far afield from its own concerns. There is a lengthy treatise on the virtues of small family farms, a passionate endorsement of the Panama Canal treaty, and a document that insists on the rights of Palestinians to reparations from Israel and a state of their own.

THE VAST MAJORITY of these statements are drafted by the U.S.C.C.'s nine-member policy-writing staff, but the bishops are aware of what is issued under their imprimatur, and many have taken considerable pride in the progressive tenor of their pronouncements. In 1976, after a particularly disastrous conference, where 1,300 Catholics convened by the bishops voted resolutions calling for ordination of women, permitting priests to marry, reinstatement for divorced Catholics who have remarried, and determination of conscience in birth control, Archbishop Joseph L. Bernadin assured the *National Catholic Reporter* that "in the area of social concerns" the bishops were "ahead of the mainstream" of Catholics. "We've got the substance, but not the style, maybe, to attract a larger audience," explained Bernadin, who was recently made a cardinal and heads the committee that drafted the nuclear pastoral letter. "These things [the bishops' policy statements] have to be written in a more popular style."

The draft pastoral letter has certainly succeeded in attracting this larger audience. Until now, the bishops' policy statements have gone generally unnoticed outside the Church, although that is not to say that they have been without effect. The Catholic Church, for all its recent divagations, is still an institution where official documents matter—even if they matter somewhat inconsistently. Thus Catholic activists who dismiss *Humanae Vitae* out of hand will cite chapter and verse of *Populorum Progressio* in support of their political activities. *Populorum Progressio* and similar statements have played a critical role in legitimating social activism within the institutional Church. (The 1968 statement of the Latin American bishops at Medellin, Colombia, and the 1971 declaration *Justice in the World* by the World Synod of Bishops are also key documents for the activists.) Therein lies the real significance of the bishops' nuclear pastoral message. Because of the general erosion of authority within the Church, statements by bishops these days are unlikely to change the minds of many lay Catholics, but they can provide impetus for the commitment of the Church's considerable resources—moral and financial—to particular political programs. Official documents free clerics and Church professionals to act politically, ostensibly on behalf of the Church.

NUMEROUS CLERICS are already involved in anti-nuclear activities, and many of them predict that the bishops' letter, if approved in roughly its present form, will open the floodgates to new involvement. "There are a lot of staff people who would like to act on these issues," explains Sister Valerie Heinonen, who directs military affairs for the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility in New York. "But until there is a formal statement, they can't act. People criticize them. If they can go back to a formal statement, that's the end of the argument."

Yet it is not clear how much thought bishops and Church leaders have given to the broad social consequences of their pronouncements on topics like nuclear war. Thus far the most important practical effect of these declarations has been to fan the fires of political activism among clerics.

Many clerical activists approach politics with a naive air of moral certitude and an irresponsible singleness of purpose. Yet as the Church awakened to its new political role, enormous institutional power fell into the hands of these well-meaning but unworldly sisters and priests. More and more religious communities have placed their institutionally held stock portfolios at the service of activist members, who have used them to put shareholders' resolutions on corporate ballots. In the past year ninety communities of sisters and priests have joined forces with the Milwaukee diocese and with several Protestant congregations to take action against nineteen companies involved in defense work. The resolutions

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are intended to force companies like General Electric and AT&T to get out of the business of designing and building nuclear weapons. Though none of the resolutions is likely to succeed, millions of dollars of stock are involved. Altogether the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility has about $8 billion in church-owned shares, Protestant and Catholic, at its disposal for such initiatives.

THE CLERICS directing the corporate responsibility campaign are remarkably untroubled by the prospect that their efforts could have a one-sided impact, curtailing U.S. weapons production without affecting similar cutbacks in the Soviet Union. They act with an assurance that only the Holy Spirit should provide. "We think if you have two countries, one atheistic and one God-fearing," says Father Michael Crosby, a Franciscan Capuchin who coordinates shareholder activity for the National Catholic Coalition for Responsible Investment, "and if the two are at the same point [as regards nuclear armaments], the first step ought to be taken by the Christian group. Faith is the ultimate rationale. We must be the ones to take the concrete first step. What's happening now in this country is no different from what's happening in the atheistic country. We're the ones who should be turning the other cheek."

To hear clerics like Father Crosby discuss these matters so simplistically is to long for the days of Wolsey and Richelieu, when the Church's immense power fell into the hands of men who, while ebulliently corrupt, were nonetheless shrewd and prudent. In the new Church the chief qualification for authority increasingly seems to be laudable intentions and an uncanny ability to read diplomacy and military policy directly from Biblical parables. Yet the stance of perfect innocence is not without its moral ironies. Thus a sister in Washington who coordinates political action for nuns can calmly explain that the sisters' activities range "from the smashing of warheads, to the pouring of blood, to a simple presence," as though it were hard to imagine good works taking any other form.

And always in the background are Church documents. "I don't see that we have much to worry about," says Sister Heinonen, "especially if we fall back on our theological documents. For Roman Catholics it's easy to pull out a whole bunch of documents about peace. According to our statements, this is what we're supposed to be doing."

In the end, the modern Church is faced with an almost insuperable dilemma. The fact is that its traditional teaching on sexual matters, and indeed on much of private life, retains little popular appeal. Inevitably, it is the "social Gospel" that proves most resonant for modern Catholics. The Pope himself seems acutely conscious of this circumstance; though John Paul II dutifully reiterates more traditional Church themes, it is the message of justice and peace that electrifies his hearers. This recurrent public emphasis on politics by the Pope and the bishops is altering the nature of Catholic doctrine, if not as it is technically expressed in official pronouncements, at least as it lives in the minds of Church members. For many Catholics today, religious feeling has been redefined in political terms, and the very content of moral life has changed: the old preoccupation with scrupulous personal virtue has been replaced by a generalized sense of good intentions and series of impeccably "virtuous" stances on public issues. Otherworldliness has given way to utopianism; as a result, the spiritual has come to be understood by many as something in opposition not so much to the profane world as a whole as to the established political order. In such a context, the "religious" approach to politics almost necessarily takes the form of extremism. After all, what makes a political position "religious," "Christian," or "Catholic" is precisely its uncompromising purity of intention, its vehemence, its unwillingness to accede to the exigencies of the secular realm. And so friars today awaken us to the sacred by demanding that we conduct foreign policy according to the rules laid forth in the Sermon on the Mount, and they use all the temporal power at their disposal to see that we are forced to do so. Catholicism is not alone in this development; but because of its enormous institutional power—it remains the nation's largest denomination—its inner shifts can have significant consequences for all of us.

DEFENDERS of the Church's social doctrine emphasize that there is a great distance between the Vatican's generalized statements on such topics as disarmament and the actual endorsement of specific policies; but what characterizes the current clerical activism is precisely the direct application of principle to practice. Since the Church is for disarmament, one must favor the freeze. Since the Church favors negotiations, one must back SALT II. Since the Church backs peace, one must do everything in one's power to prevent the manufacture of nuclear weapons by U.S. companies. By consistently failing to distinguish between general moral principles—with which we all agree—and specific applications of these principles, the bishops have opened the way to a flood of naive activist initiatives whose long-term consequences are difficult to predict.

Long ago, defending Catholicism's compatibility with democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote:

> The Catholic priests in America have divided the intellectual world into two parts: in the one they place the doctrines of revealed religion, which they assent to without discussion; in the other they leave those political truths which they believe the Deity has left open to free inquiry. Thus the Catholics of the United States are at the same time the most submissive believers and the most independent citizens.

The situation described by Tocqueville has exactly reversed itself. Now many Catholics assent to political "truths" without a second thought; it is the doctrines of revealed religion that have become problematical.

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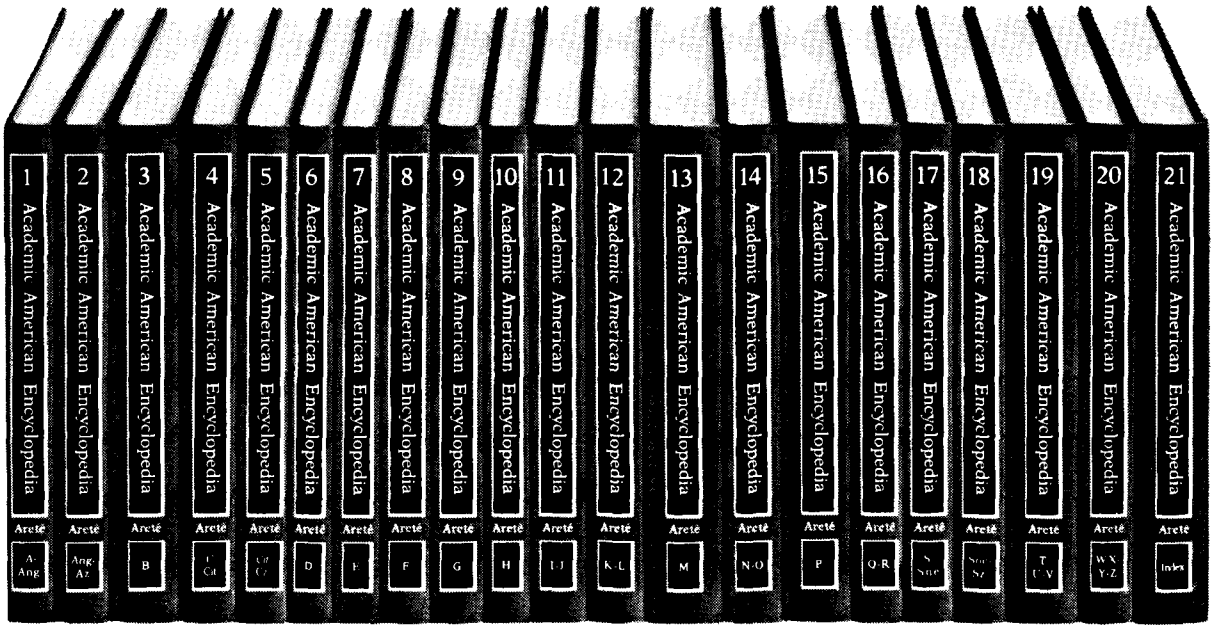

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Freedom, fear, and powerlessness in white South Africa.

A Month In The Country

By Thomas Nagel

SOUTH AFRICA is at present unique among unjust societies, not only because of its system of racial domination, but also because the 4.5 million whites who hold power over 25 million nonwhites constitute among themselves a political democracy. This democracy-within-a-tyranny has certain internal imperfections (for example, rural whites are overrepresented because substantial variation is allowed in the population of constituencies), but it is a majoritarian democracy of an unusually "pure" form: there is no Bill of Rights, and a simple parliamentary majority can do essentially anything except revoke the equal status of English and Afrikaans as official languages.

The sense that the white population is collectively responsible for apartheid through its elected representatives gives a special point to protest and pressure from the West. These exhortations are addressed not to a dictator, a junta, or a central committee, but to a society —or subsociety—in which decisions are reached by political means with the substantial participation of a reasonably free and well-informed population. One strain of external polemic against South Africa is that the whites should transfer power to a democracy of the whole country—perhaps one with some safeguards against unlimited majority rule. But if this is offered as a genuine recommendation, not merely as an observation about what would be right, it implies a very optimistic view of South African political possibilities.

According to a grimmer view, the whites, though responsible for the situation, must be written off as morally hopeless. They have so much to lose from racial and social justice that they can be expected to block significant change as long as they can. White politics is seen as irrelevant: change will come only when the blacks of South Africa are strong enough to force it—with the help of allies in Africa and elsewhere. The only policy this suggests for outsiders is to withhold resources from the whites that would enable them to resist the inevitable revolution. There will be no sudden explosion, but there will be a long war of attrition that the blacks will finally win, as they did in Zimbabwe.

It may be like that, but it may not. What will happen in South Africa depends crucially on developments in the white community, because these will determine how the government meets revolutionary pressure from the blacks—that is, so long as it remains a parliamentary system. If there is a civil war, it will almost certainly end not in victory but in a settlement, even if it is the first of several; and the form of that settlement will depend as much on white as on black politics. Even in Zimbabwe, with its much higher black-white ratio and weaker economy, the war ended in a political, not a military, victory. It is certain that much that happens over the next fifty years will be bad, but just how bad depends on what people do. Fatalism is tempting, but it is a trap.

The divisions in South African society are very complex. Among blacks, there are hostilities between tribal or language groups (which are exploited by the government), divisions between urban and rural blacks, and hard feelings between those like Zulu Chief Gatsha Buthelezi who are politically active within the law and those who on principle are not. Among whites, the English-Afrikaner division is profound, though by no means absolute. Afrikaners, who come from Dutch and Huguenot stock, have a powerful, nationalistic, self-contained identity not connected with Europe. This is evident even among Afrikaner intellectuals. English-speaking whites think of themselves as belonging to the international English culture. Despite mutual distrust, these Northern European Protestants who divide economic and political control of the country possess formidable resources of ruthlessness, industry, organizational and entrepreneurial skill, and military capacity. But they also encompass serious internal divisions.

I spent four weeks in South Africa in July and August of 1982, and what I particularly hoped to understand from the inside was the situation of whites who oppose white supremacy. They naturally benefit from the system whose legitimacy they reject, and their most obvious form of political action or influence is through it: they *are* white, as white as it is possible to be in this world. It seemed to me in advance that it would be an unusually difficult identity to sustain, and I wondered why they hadn't all left by now.

On the other hand they're not in the position of Soviet dissidents; even though numbers of whites have been banned, or arrested without charge and tortured by the security police, the government uses its repressive pow-

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ers selectively. This selective use has its effect. I met young whites who said they would join the revolution if they weren't so scared of the security police. But so far white liberals can feel relatively safe, and some of them believe they can make a difference to the country's future. Yet they are faced with a particularly acute version of a central problem of political morality: what to do when you are free to act but a just result is not one of the available options. Political morality differs from individual morality in that the nature and consequences of your acts are much more deeply dependent on what others do, and on the institutions in which you are enmeshed. Responsibilities are not under your own control. Whatever their views, South African whites find themselves in highly compromising circumstances, and the temptation to dissociate must be great.

When I was invited to lecture at the University of the Witwatersrand (called Wits, pronounced with a V) in Johannesburg, I asked friends what they thought, got a predictably wide range of opinions, and agonized dutifully. But I wanted to go. The invitation was accompanied by an impressive document titled "The University and Academic Freedom," explaining the university's consistent record of opposition to segregation and saying there were about 1,500 nonwhite students there (about 10 percent of the student body), despite a requirement that every African, Asian, or Coloured (the South African government's terminology for people of mixed race) who is admitted receive Ministerial permission to attend. And there were blacks on the faculty. Clearly this was a liberal institution, and boycotting it seemed to me a doubtful way of expressing opposition to the government and its policies. A subsequent invitation from the University of Cape Town was accompanied by a similar document—apparently the standard approach to Western liberals—and I arranged to spend a week there, too.

I WAS ALSO DRAWN by a more personal sense of alternate possibilities. Those members of my family who managed to get out of Europe in the 1930s, trying to put as much distance as possible between themselves and Hitler, ended up in places like Australia, North and South America, and South Africa. My parents and I landed in New York, but my mother's brother and her parents went to Johannesburg. If things had gone differently, I might have been an undergraduate at Wits in the 1950s instead of at Cornell.

An academic visitor may try to see as much as possible, particularly of the workings of apartheid and their concrete effect on blacks, but he inevitably sees the country from a special and distorting vantage point. Wits and Cape Town are strongly identified with the liberal segment of the English-speaking two-fifths of the white majority—a group with a small representation in Parliament through the Progressive Federal Party, and which also supports the Institute of Race Relations, the Black Sash, and the Legal Resources Center, organizations that document and help blacks cope with legal and bureaucratic nightmares.

The government tends to leave these institutions alone despite their opposition and despite the fact that the universities are heavily supported by government funds. The Nationalist Party doesn't need the support of the English-speaking minority, but it can't easily afford their active resistance, which it would risk by too general a crackdown. Some South Africans I met, both black and white, agreed with some of my American and English friends that support for an institution that the regime has reason to tolerate, despite its opposition, is a form of support for the regime, and that I shouldn't have come. I continue to believe that breaking outside contact with this liberal minority will do no good, and would probably reduce its already very limited influence—but it gave me a twinge when an African student at Cape Town replied, "Ah, I see: constructive engagement!"

ONE OF THE unsettling things about South Africa is its familiarity: the white culture that floats on this huge, heavily controlled poor black population is perfectly recognizable to a resident of Northern Europe or North America. Blacks trudge for miles along the edge of the superhighways, but the green and white signs overhead are the same as those in California or New York. So are the cars, the shopping centers, the clothes, the appliances, the food, drink, books, and furniture. Normality in sufficiently bizarre or extreme circumstances feels unreal, and in this case the effect is very strong, especially at first.

Americans are accustomed to the suffocating power of racial identity. But in South Africa the strength of the feeling of whiteness and blackness is overpowering: it fills one's life and one's consciousness, and one cannot escape it. Readers of the Western press know about the Pass Laws, the Group Areas Act, the resettlement areas, the crowded and barren "homelands" with shantytowns like garbage heaps into which Africans are crammed and from which they must send wage-earners to the white economy in order to subsist—but to see and feel these things in operation made my white skin crawl.

The Western Cape has been almost emptied of blacks through deportation, but around Johannesburg blacks are everywhere, and so is the sense of their exclusion and surveillance. One doesn't see black children in Johannesburg because blacks are there only to work for whites; but in Soweto (South West Township) a population of 1.5 million lives in what looks like a giant prison camp, with rows of identical government-owned barracks or huts stretching for miles under a gritty haze of red dust and smoke. (See "A Double Irony," by Madeleine G. Kalb, on page 18.) This is next to a rich, clean city of glass and steel, with northern suburbs that look like Scarsdale. An African colleague at Wits showed me and my wife all this, and had us to dinner at his house in Soweto to meet some nonacademic friends. It was a hilarious evening, despite the grimness of the subject

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A Double Irony

Johannesburg

The soul-searching among Afrikaner intellectuals took a curious turn recently. Johan Koornhof, a 27-year-old South African Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, completed a doctoral thesis based upon a survey of the black population of Soweto, and concluded that the vast majority of Sowetans—84 percent—see themselves as permanent residents of "white" South Africa, while only 6.2 percent believe that their "real homes" are in one of the tribal "homelands," the 13 percent of the land set aside for over 70 percent of the population. This, of course, flies in the face of Nationalist Party dogma, which insists that every black person, no matter where he or she actually lives, is officially a citizen of a "homeland." It was unusual enough for a privileged young Afrikaner to be the source of such unwelcome information. What made it even more unusual is that Johan Koornhof is the son of the Cabinet minister who formulates South Africa's rigid apartheid regulations.

But this is not simply a classic generational clash. There is an additional irony. The father, Piet Koornhof, who holds the Orwellian title of Minister of Cooperation and Development, completed his own doctoral dissertation at Oxford thirty years ago, and he too came to a conclusion that had little in common with the orthodox Afrikaner view. Like his son, he studied African urbanization; and he concluded that it was futile for whites to try to stop the drift from the all-black reserves to the cities.

The government's vision has been quite different. It was most clearly enunciated in 1978 by Connie Mulder, then Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, who promised the day would come when "there will not be one black man with South African citizenship." The program is working, up to a point: four "homelands" have accepted "independence"—which means that those born there, or those speaking its language, are citizens of that "independent" state and have absolutely no rights in South Africa itself, including the right to work or live in an urban area. Leaders of other proposed "homelands"—notably Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, whose Zulus constitute South Africa's largest tribal group, outnumbering the whites—have declined the honor, despite government pressure.

"Independent" or not, the homelands cannot support the population forced to live there; there is too little fertile land and there are too few jobs. Blacks are obliged to seek work in the cities, legally or illegally. They prefer to bring their families to shantytowns such as Crossroads, outside Cape Town, where hundreds of people depend on a single outdoor water pump, because they feel their children have a better chance of survival there, even illegally, than in the barren homelands, where malnutrition is common and infant mortality rates are high.

South Africa's Pass Laws are designed to ensure that permits are issued only to the Africans needed to keep the white economy running. To suggest, as young Koornhof does, that the government reverse its policy and grant the Africans "full property rights" is close to heresy. Even more far-reaching was his discovery that the Sowetans had developed "a very sophisticated value pattern"; they cared a great deal about "human dignity." "The question must be asked whether we are treating these people with the dignity they crave," he told the English-language newspaper, *The Sunday Times*. His father's conclusions, thirty years earlier, were strikingly similar: Koornhof called for greater cooperation between the races, warning that the inevitable alternative would be "resentment and rebellion against the social structure which may easily develop into revolt or a general state of anarchy."

Koornhof came into office with the reputation of a reformist. One of his first steps was to announce that he was "declaring war on the Pass Laws." But when his long-awaited "reforms" were finally announced, it became clear that the pass system—or "influx control," as it is now called—was to be more rigid than ever. In the past, the penalties for a black South African living or working illegally in an urban area were harsh but bearable: a man was prepared to risk being caught and paying a fine of 100 rands (about $100) or spending a few weeks in jail for the sake of a few months' work. The new law calls for tougher punishments. There is to be a 500-rand fine, or six months in jail, for any black person caught in town between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. without a permit; for any black person working or looking for work in town without a permit; for anyone, black or white, who allows a black person to stay in his house at night without a permit.

The new Pass Laws hardly square with the views of Koornhof's son about the importance of "human dignity" for blacks, or, for that matter, with the father's youthful views about racial cooperation. The younger Koornhof is aware of the problem he is raising. "I have always wanted not to harm what my father has been doing," he said, "but I am a South African and care deeply about the future of my country. It could not be responsible of me if I did not speak out on what I have found."

All this serves to illustrate the problem facing thoughtful Afrikaner intellectuals and officials. Within their small, closed circle, they are questioning basic values and dreaming of reforms that seem to them so daring that they can be launched only at the risk of alienating their party's conservative constituents. And one can argue that any sign of a more rational approach within the politically dominant Afrikaner community should be welcomed. Yet when all the discussion is over, and the results are announced—as in the case of the recent constitutional proposals offering token parliamentary representation to the Indian and so-called Coloured groups and nothing to the blacks—they naturally strike the outsider as so grudging and so petty as to be almost meaningless, especially when they are viewed alongside regressive steps such as the new pass laws. Two steps forward, three steps back.

Madeleine G. Kalb

Madeleine G. Kalb is the author of *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa from Eisenhower to Kennedy* (Macmillan).

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matter. They all seemed to have a dominant sense of the absurdity of the situation, together with long-term optimism about the outcome, however long it takes and however much it costs.

It's a police state, with censorship, banning, and detention without trial. While I was in Johannesburg, where the inquiry into Neil Aggett's death in detention was still under way, there was a similar death: Moabi Dipale, a 21-year-old African arrested for interrogation, was reported to have hanged himself in his cell. Louis LeGrange, the Minister of Law and Order, who had said earlier that if it hadn't been for the Aggett case they would have had a very good record since the Biko case, commented on this occasion that you won't get much information out of someone if you keep him in a five-star hotel.

At the same time, the *Rand Daily Mail* is a good newspaper, and a great deal of information and opinion is available in magazines and newspapers despite constant but unsystematic censorship. The legal system operates with a certain amount of independence and sometimes rules against the government, as it did recently in declaring illegal the attempt to give away Ingwavuma and KaNgwane, two chunks of black "homeland" territory with a million people in them, to Swaziland. Partly because it's a capitalistic economy, private institutions like the Black Sash, the Legal Resources Center, and the English universities can support operations against the direction of official policy. And there is constant and open political discussion of a kind familiar whenever freedom is combined with impotence.

THE GOVERNMENT'S new constitutional proposals, unveiled while I was there, produced substantial parliamentary defections to the Conservative Party as well as attacks from Africans, Coloureds, Asians, and white liberals; but the Nationalist Party has the votes and will presumably put them through; and the main Coloured political party has now agreed to participate. It is hard to read these proposals without laughing aloud because of the toy-like devices by which Coloureds and Asians (but not blacks) are included in the rituals of government without being given power: shiny new wheels that aren't attached to anything.

There will be three legislative chambers: white, Coloured, and Asian. The president of the republic will be picked by an electoral college consisting of electors chosen by the *majority* parties in each chamber, in the ratio 50:25:13. In other words, 50 of the 88 electors will be members of the Nationalist Party. The president picked by this group will then appoint 25 members to the President's Council, whose 35 other members will be elected by the majority parties (again) in each chamber, in the ratio 20:10:5. So 45 of the 60 seats on the President's Council will be controlled by the majority party in the white chamber; and it is this council that has the decisive say over legislation, for it will act when the three chambers, communicating in joint committees, cannot reach agreement. (Some matters of purely "community" concern may be dealt with by one chamber only, but the president will have sole discretion as to whether a bill is to be so classified.) In short, nothing will happen under the proposed system that the majority party in the white legislature doesn't want to happen—which is the situation now.

I was present at a meeting in which Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, leader of the opposition, first stated the P.F.P.'s rejection of these proposals. Slabbert, a tall, youthful, corn-fed Afrikaner who was once a sociology lecturer at Wits, was addressing a very sleek and cosmopolitan crowd that had turned out in the Johannesburg suburb of Houghton for Helen Suzman's thirtieth annual report to her constituents. It was an occasion of tributes to Mrs. Suzman from various party figures, and with comic uniformity each of them preceded his encomium by reporting that it was offered in defiance of her strict orders: she had apparently tried to bully all of the speakers into leaving her out of it, an effort she could not have imagined would succeed. I got the impression that this was not the first occasion that her colleagues showed mild resentment at being pushed around.

FROM 1961 TO 1974 she was the only Progressive in Parliament, and I had always thought of her as an isolated and embattled figure. But when I saw her in the context of that large, intimate collection of supporters, with fur coats, gleaming hair, and the unmistakable physical quality of wealth and international culture, the picture changed somewhat. She is a woman of formidable charm, wit, and self-assurance, and the certitude of her status in that wealthy, self-confident community must have been a great help in giving her the emotional strength to treat the political establishment with the contempt it deserves. (She was just back from a trip to Russia, and reported that she had sent a postcard of Red Square to the Minister of Law and Order, addressed to "Comrade Louis LeGrange." Since he hadn't got it, she assumed it was in the hands of either the K.G.B. or the South African Security Police.)

Slabbert is in a more complex position: these were not his people, and he had difficulty finding the right tone. Though his condemnation of the government's latest version of white supremacy was strong and eloquent, he started off with some corny jokes that should have been saved for a less sophisticated audience. At the end he challenged the Prime Minister to call a general election to test public reaction to the proposals, predicting that as a result of Nationalist defections to the Conservative Party and a growth in Progressive support, the Progressive Party would hold the "balance of power" in the next parliament. But in fact it seems likely that the Conservatives would gain more than the P.F.P. in a new election, and highly unlikely that the Nationalists would ever form a coalition with the Progressives. Next morning, the *Rand Daily Mail* described the speech as a

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"major setback" for the Prime Minister's proposals. But while the evening had created an exhilarating sense of possibility, this seemed an exaggeration.

Witwatersrand University reminded me of Berkeley in look and feel: a crowded mixture of modern and traditional buildings on a large, self-contained campus; eucalyptus trees and flowering shrubs, red tiled roofs, a Marxist student government, a racially mixed student body. Not long ago someone publicly burned a South African flag there. Most students are from Johannesburg and its suburbs, and 70 percent live at home. About four thousand of them, I was told, are Jews. During my visit the war in Lebanon was at its height, and rival demonstrations led to fist fights between Jews and blacks. But racist feelings of the more ordinary kind, where they exist, are submerged.

I had no idea what to expect of my students—all third-year philosophy students, and all white—but, as it turned out, none of them defended the system. Reasonably enough, they were on the whole extremely pessimistic. Some of them said they were going to leave as soon as possible. Those who planned to stay didn't know what to do. Some were more or less Marxists, who thought the right way to see the South African situation was as a class struggle—a view I found surprisingly common. Others defended liberalism or the free market. The real disagreements in the group were over familiar issues of political theory, between egalitarian socialists, libertarian capitalists, utilitarians, defenders of natural rights, and moral skeptics: the positions were like those that surface in a typical American philosophy class. We had a good time together, though some of them eventually told me (nothing personal, mind you) that I shouldn't have come.

There were no blacks in my class because ministerial permission is granted for the admission of blacks only to study subjects they cannot find in the government-controlled, highly repressive black universities (staffed primarily by Afrikaners), and a philosophy concentration is not one of these. Blacks who do come to Wits and Cape Town are especially handicapped not only because the schools they attended are terrible, but also because their elementary instruction has usually been in an African language, and the time they have had to learn English well is therefore limited. The government tried for a while to require that blacks take half of their secondary school subjects in English and half in Afrikaans, but this stupefying policy was abandoned after it provoked the Soweto riots of 1976. Because examination results from the black and white school systems are not really comparable, academic support programs have been added, and special courses and tutoring have affected the performance of these students noticeably. But some of those I met were having a rough time, both academically and socially. Some felt the double alienation of exclusion by the white community and disloyalty to the black—though one young African said he was in no danger of forgetting that the white man is his enemy.

COMING:

The Revolt Against Reagan's Deregulators.

I SPENT A DAY each at Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg and Stellenbosch in the Cape Province. (Afrikaners know English even if the English don't all know Afrikaans.) At R.A.U. I lectured about the history of desegregation in the United States and the controversies over the interpretation of equal treatment that have emerged in the current dispute about affirmative action. The issue is not unreal to them, both because affirmative action is practiced in some segments of this radically segregated society and because they know there is no possibility whatever that the end of white rule here would be followed by a system of color-blind equality of opportunity. Some students brought up Africanization in Zimbabwe, an example that is much on their minds. But most of them listened politely and kept their views to themselves.

At Stellenbosch, the leading Afrikaans university and the alma mater of most of the Cabinet, the students asked me to speak about military involvement with universities, a topic of current concern because the army has just formed a unit consisting of all men at Stellenbosch who have done their initial military service (as many do before university), so that it can keep track of them and call them up together in vacations for supplementary service—something that is becoming a regular feature of South African life. These were students in the somewhat atypical Department of Political Philosophy, which split off from the more religiously oriented Philosophy Department some time ago. They were worried about the increase in surveillance that this military presence would bring.

I talked about the fights over R.O.T.C., the Institute for Defense Analysis, and military research on campus during the Vietnam War, and asked whether their concern was based on a general principle of university independence or on the particular policies that their government's military forces are used to implement—an ambiguity that was present in the U.S. protests. After a silence a student replied that it is against the law in South Africa to say anything that would encourage someone to refuse to serve in the armed forces. The entire discussion was very circumspect, and oppressive in a way that the merely powerless talk of the English students was not. I couldn't get them to say anything at all about apartheid and the general issue of political legitimacy. They felt they were being watched, and they were scared. I believed them when they told me that the

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government took their deviations seriously: they're not like the students at Wits who are written off as radicals. Not only do the university authorities join with the government in enforcing orthodoxy, I was told, but fellow students may trash your room or beat you up if you express incorrect opinions. Afrikaner solidarity is still the foundation of the government's power.

Most of the Afrikaner faculty members I met, whatever their political views, seemed to feel indelibly identified with their people (one of them called it a tribe). Some, such as Johannes Degenaar and Andre du Toit at Stellenbosch, have been severe public critics of the policies of the *verligte* (enlightened) Nationalists who now dominate the government. But most feel that they must address themselves to their fellow Afrikaners rather than detach themselves completely. If they have any leverage it is there, rather than through identification with the largely English P.F.P.

Of course it isn't the reformist critics but the right-wing backlash that worries the government. But the position of these people is interesting, and intellectually and morally uncomfortable. To work in any sense from inside this system, one must think not so much about what is right as about what those in power—government and electorate—might conceivably be persuaded to do that would be better than what they are doing. When white or Afrikaner interests supply the major premise, it is difficult to think what can decently be offered by way of reformist criticism. Some of the Afrikaners I met displayed great clarity and detachment, but in others the conflict between group identification and the sense of justice was palpable.

THERE HAVE BEEN efforts to devise forms of political pluralism, government by consensus, "consociational" democracy, or group rights to define a settlement in which the whites would not lose everything. These proposals are so far too unclear to evaluate. They invite the suspicion that what is contemplated is a guarantee that whites will lose very little—and that is incompatible with the assumption of significant black power.

Whites don't want to give up their California-style existence, but it's not clear what kind of rights this group can plausibly claim from a projected just government of the whole country. What conditions can be offered by a political theorist to white politicians as morally defensible conditions for the end of white rule? Even if we set aside the absurdity of the creators of apartheid demanding that their community's rights be respected, it is hard to see how anything more could be claimed than respect for those individual rights of freedom of association, due process, freedom of speech and thought, movement and work, that are now denied to blacks. But a black government that guaranteed those rights to everyone, whites included, would not thereby protect their form of life. Only giving them their own state would do that.

For this reason federation or partition are also proposed as ideas for a settlement. But while partition may emerge as the de facto result of an inconclusive civil war, and may be justified to prevent further bloodshed, there seems little independent moral basis for it.

These debates are fueled by the conviction that what will happen in South Africa in the foreseeable future depends on what the whites, and more specifically the Afrikaners, do. They are more politically divided now than they have been in years, and if SWAPO eventually takes over in Namibia, the right will be strengthened by an influx of Afrikaner refugees even more embittered than the English who have come in since the defeat in Zimbabwe. But the blacks are weak, fragmented, concentrated, and very heavily controlled; the front-line states are economically fragile and vulnerable to harassment by the South African army; the country has a strong industrial economy, an effective police state, and an army that is everywhere. Even with substantial Soviet aid they will be very hard to defeat.

BUT OUTRIGHT DEFEAT might not be necessary. An urban guerrilla campaign carried out over a long period, together with sabotage and strikes made possible by the growing black presence in industry, plus a drawn-out series of border engagements, may eventually exhaust even the Afrikaners. Already some young men are being recalled to the army for an extra three months a year; this could be increased to six months, and men are liable for duty into their 50s. More people will leave to avoid this, as they did in Rhodesia, and the costs of maintaining white supremacy may finally get too high. At some point negotiations could take place, with whites hoping that black leaders would have an incentive to induce them to stay, because the country's industrial economy would disintegrate without them.

But a great deal of blood will probably flow before this point is reached. Afrikaners, like Americans in the South and Southwest, own personal arms and have a capacity for violence and vigilantism that may emerge if official repression seems to them insufficiently ruthless. Or there could be a military takeover, if the civilian government fails to cope with domestic violence.

There are many Africans in the army and police. I sometimes wonder whether this doesn't present a high revolutionary risk for the government, but it didn't happen in Rhodesia; these soldiers are at least as brutal to other Africans as the whites are. Apparently once they join up, the polarizing effect is self-sustaining.

There seems little prospect that the present government or one of its successors will look down this ghastly road and decide instead to go straight for some version of the settlement that seems inevitably to lie at the end of it, forgoing the violence in between. The sense of the inevitability of eventual black rule, shared by blacks and white liberals there and by all the rest of the world, is one that the majority of white South Africans do not have. Until they acquire it, the motivation to resist will remain; and the process of acquisition is likely to be long and painful.

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Never underestimate the resourcefulness and dedication of telephone people to figure out how to reach a goal.

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ITURE, NOT DEMOLITION."

airman of the Board, AT&T

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If we have a truly competitive communications marketplace, with regulation only where it is needed, I believe AT&T and the divested telephone companies have a significant and constructive role to play in revitalizing the American economy and in maintaining and enhancing US technological leadership in communications.

The Bell System as we now know it will be no more. We will divest. But we are not demolishing the promise of tomorrow. That promise is alive and well. Bell System people are ready for new directions.

Bell System

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Possible and Impossible

Sometimes when the emperor's new clothes are being extolled, he isn't in fact absolutely naked but he *is* walking around in his underpants. John Sayles is a thirty-two-year-old American of varied gifts and, according to report, intense

Lianna
United Artists Classics

Lovesick
Ladd Company/Warner Brothers

dedication. I haven't read his fiction, but I know that his first short story won an O. Henry Award and his second novel was nominated for two national awards. He has worked in the theater and has written screenplays for six cheap (in two senses) films, none of which I've seen. He has also written, edited, and directed two serious films. The statistics alone are astonishing and perhaps his fiction is good; but I've seen the two serious films and must report that, in my view, his reputation as director to date seems based largely on his status as phenomenon. After what he has accomplished in the first ten years of his career (Williams, Class of 1972), he may indeed become a filmmaker. But, so far, those directorial robes of his are only underpants, and it doesn't do any good to him, his audience, or the always wobbly condition of criticism to exaggerate.

The Return of the Secaucus Seven, the first of his serious films, was about a house-party reunion of former political activists and the emotional tangles involved. Sayles obviously knew his characters well; obviously, too, his direction of actors was imperceptive, his use of the camera and his editing were clumsy and mechanical. Sayles's new film, *Lianna*, is about a young faculty wife with two children, uneasily married, who takes a course with a visiting teacher, a woman, falls in love with the woman, and has a lesbian affair that ends her marriage and eventually leaves her stranded. Again the themes are pertinent, the minutiae are precise, the dialogue shows some insight and wit. But again it is a writer's film, with no directing fluency or control, no assurance that the film form is Sayles's habitat.

And, like *Secaucus Seven*, a few of the major moments in the script itself are forced. Lianna voluntarily confesses to her husband, when he returns from a conference, that during his absence she has had an affair. This roils him but not to outburst. Then she tells him, again voluntarily, that her lover is a woman. Nothing in the situation compels Lianna to tell him either of these things. We can believe either that she is compulsively honest or that Sayles is pushing: if she didn't confess these things, there would be no film. And *then*, when the husband gets angry and asks her to leave, Lianna says that he has come back from that conference just looking for an excuse to break up their marriage. This after she has pushed the facts in his face! Or does she believe that if she hadn't had her affair or hadn't told him, he would have thrown her out anyway because she forgot to bring his suit back from the cleaners?

The editing is gauche. In one sequence Lianna and another faculty wife are shopping in a supermarket. Behind them, a man, unknown to us, is shoving along a shopping cart and randomly "shooting" boxes into it as in basketball. I thought he was just a local loon, added for color and a threat of male harassment. About an hour later I learned that this man is the husband of Lianna's friend.

Of filmmaking ineptness, one example. A sequence starts with Lianna, now living alone because her husband dispossessed her and her lover can't risk having them reside together, sitting in a chair at night reading. No student at a competent film school would be allowed to start a sequence that way: it's too blatant a signal to the audience that an interruption is coming. (The doorbell soon rings; and, incidentally, the character who rings it is played by Sayles.) The very least that a film teacher would suggest is that Lianna be doing something—washing dishes, speaking on the phone, anything—rather than sit there wearing an invisible sign that says, "I'm being static so that I can be brought into motion."

Many, many moments in the film keep pressing their gawkiness on us, so that whatever there is of value in the script—not an overwhelming lot—is hobbled. We can discern the picture that Sayles wanted to do, but it's frozen within a carapace of ice made by his clumsiness. And he is not much helped by the performance of Linda Griffiths in the title role. She has very little spontaneity or warmth; she seems mostly to be obeying director's orders—a director who isn't helping her much. Better performances, of some validity, come from Jon DeVries as the husband and Jane Hallaren as Lianna's lover, but the sum is like a lesser made-for-TV film daring to tackle a controversial subject.

The most disturbing element in Sayles's critical reception is the suspicion that he is being hailed as a filmmaker because he has shown gifts *outside* film, which, if true, shows one more aspect of an inferiority complex in film people. (James Toback, an infinitely less interesting writer-director, stirred the same response.) The most disturbing element in Sayles's work is the suspicion that his intelligence and power of social observation satisfy him, make cinematic fluency

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Parsifal. H. J. Syberberg's highly idiosyncratic view of Wagner's (complete) work. The ear is delighted, the eye surprised sometimes but always held.

Sophie's Choice. Meryl Streep's performance is the only reason—though a strong one—to see this collapsed rendition of an inflated novel.

Time for Revenge. An Argentine radical's clever vengeance on the System. Twisty, tight, well acted and directed.

When Joseph Returns. A young Budapest wife, separated from her sailor husband, discovers how loneliness corrupts. Lili Monori is startlingly good in a well-made film.

SK

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secondary to him. At this moment he is not nearly as rewarding a filmmaker, per se, as Susan Seidelman, who directed *Smithereens* (TNR, December 6, 1982). Seidelman is not a writer—she had the idea for her film, but others had to write the script—and has won no literary awards; but she understands film as a language much better than the present-day Sayles.

Still, his endowments certainly license a hope for his growth.

OTHER INEPTNESS, better disguised by a bigger budget, licenses no hope whatsoever. All through *Lovesick*, I kept wondering what Marshall Brickman's secret can be. This is the second film he has written and directed—the first was *Simon* with Alan Arkin—and again it's so thin, so feeble, so herniatedly hip that I concluded Brickman must have some sort of grip on the money men. Perhaps he's a studio chief's nephew; or possibly he has the negatives of naughty photos involving a bank executive. Whatever the extrinsic reason, I pray that it exists: because if financiers and studio chiefs are approving Brickman's projects on the scripts' intrinsic merits, the U.S. film industry has a much darker shadow over it than I feared.

Brickman, a former colleague of Woody Allen who is apparently trying to match Allen, spoofed laboratory science in *Simon*. Now he's spoofing psychoanalysis. If you thought there were no good jokes left about the couch, you were right. An analyst, acceptably married, hears from another analyst that the latter has fallen for one of his patients, a young woman. The second man dies of a heart attack brought on by overstimulation; our hero inherits the (literal) femme fatale as a patient.

After this fair start, matters proceed flatly. I got the impression that, between scenes and sometimes within them, Brickman had paused at the typewriter to think of what to do next and that the pauses had been incorporated into the film. Brickman even uses the device of an "ancestor" from the past to counsel our hero in his quandaries: Freud himself—Alec Guinness, strayed in from *Star Wars* in different dress—implores a different Force to be with our hero.

Brickman's direction doesn't look as gawky as Sayles's because he had a high-priced technical crew, editors, and so on, to lacquer up his work; but he doesn't have any more facility than Sayles, and he certainly has a lot less honesty of intent. Is a failed smart-ass a smart half-ass? Brickman's work raises only this one interesting question.

Dudley Moore is apparently suicidal. After his success in *10* and *Arthur*, he has hastened to choose a series of scripts that are like uppercuts to his career. I infer that he wants to take the money (in a few years) and run. His last picture, called *Six Weeks*, was about a man who falls in love with a woman who has a dying child: it might better have been called *Sick Weeks*. Now Moore chooses a script called *Lovesick*. The analyst he plays in the film might have been able to help him.

One of the chief flaws, if the flaws can be graded, is that the supposedly devastating young woman is played by Elizabeth McGovern, late of *Ragtime*. McGovern has lovely eyes. I can't think of anything else pleasant to say about her, so I'll say that again. McGovern has lovely eyes.

A tale of featherbedding in the academy.

THE POVERTY OF MODERNISM

BY ROGER SHATTUCK

On that Christmas night, the U.S. customs inspectors at the Canadian border did not delay the southbound Montrealer. The growling, snow-streaked train arrived at 9:47 p.m. in Richmond, Vermont, and took on about thirty skiers from Stowe. As they clustered around the steps to climb aboard, their collective breath filled the cold night with so much vapor that it looked like the return of the steam era.

In the club car among the Scandinavian sweaters and down parkas, one passenger looked out of place. He sat alone with a drink and a book, wearing a dark green turtleneck under his corduroy jacket. Graying hair seemed to heighten the alertness of his small face. He might have been forty-five. The influx of passengers carrying bulky luggage made him look up with a frown. Then he concentrated on his book again. A young man with a full blond beard passed him, looked around, paused, and turned back. He was already smiling as he put down his ski boots and backpack.

"Mr. Carlson! I'm Chuck McDennis."

Their handshake was genuinely cordial. Twenty minutes later they had reconnoitered the two years since Chuck had left the University of Pennsylvania with an M.A. in English. Edgar Carlson's suggestion that he go on for a Ph.D. in comparative literature had not held Chuck. He was now working as junior editor for a Boston publishing house and also selling the trade list to New England bookstores and jobbers. After a few days of skiing with a friend, he was on his way to New York on book business. Edgar Carlson was chairman of the comparative literature program at the University of Pennsylvania. This year for the first time, he told Chuck, he and his wife and three teenage children were spending Christmas at their little summer place near Burlington. Edgar talked for a while about keeping a wood stove going and getting the driveway ploughed.

In the lull after the first exchange of information, Edgar ordered another round of drinks. Chuck looked with curiosity at the man whom, for over a year, he had admired and resisted in equal proportions, the person he probably would have tried to become. His "mentor" appeared wearier than Chuck remembered him, but the smile was still warm around the hazel eyes.

Edgar Carlson felt both pleased and saddened to run across the student who had caused his most lingering disappointment. He hoped he could have a talk with Chuck, yet didn't want to press things. The noise of the train and the boisterous talk of skiers in the car didn't seem to disturb either of them.

Chuck spoke first. "Edgar—do you mind if I call you Edgar?—what takes

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Roger Shattuck, author most recently of *The Forbidden Experiment* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), teaches literature at the University of Virginia. The original version of this essay was given as a talk at the Conference on Modernism, sponsored by the Claremont Colleges in April, 1982.

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you away from the family nest on Christmas night?"

"The Modern Language Association. Remember?"

"Oh yes. It's one of the reasons I quit. Why teach if you can't stay home for the Christmas holidays? Why do you go this year when you could stay in Vermont? You have candidates to interview for an opening?"

"Not really. You're right about the M. L. A. My wife could kill me. One of the pipes froze last night, and she'll have to deal with the plumber. But a year ago I was invited to give a paper at a general session. I figured I shouldn't turn it down. The subject is right up my alley."

"Wyndham Lewis?"

Edgar laughed. "Not quite. Modernism. I'll have twenty minutes. It's a good panel. They're importing some big names from France and England."

Chuck declined the cigarette Edgar offered him and looked around the car. Among all those gesticulating people in ski clothes, he couldn't keep Edgar in focus. "Why don't you tell me what you're going to say in your paper? That way I can find out what you've been thinking about for two years."

"Well, if I give you my spiel, you'll have to agree to be a stern critic. Remember what a hard time you gave me when I began to talk about codes and textuality in my seminar?"

Chuck smiled and nodded. Edgar seemed to hesitate and played with his cigarette. Then he straightened up in his chair and began.

"The tack I take is to say that we can't talk about modernism in the arts without going back at least to 1750—the English novel, Rousseau and Diderot, early German Romanticism, the rise of science. And that at the beginning of the 1980s we're approaching a new fin de siècle complete with revived decadence, catastrophism as a way of life, and a systematic refurbishing of art for art's sake. In Europe and the Americas that is. We're building a higher ivory tower, critics and artists together. The real world, if it exists, can go hang."

The train lurched so hard that they both reached for their glasses. Chuck seemed to be musing. "Isn't someone going to object that you're trying to make the twentieth century into a replay of the nineteenth?"

"Don't jump too fast. But that's partially right. What I argue is that our new fin de siècle carries two distinguishing marks. No one could miss them. First of all, we are trying to abdicate individuality, personality, identity, and everything related to them. We settle all their claims in favor of a supposedly prior entity: language. The new champions—Saussure and Wittgenstein, Sapir and Whorf, Lévi-Strauss and Barthes—have a simple message: language made us. I call it neocreationism. For these people, language didn't evolve out of a long struggle between individual human beings and the realities of life. It's just there, the sole given, occupying the whole landscape. It takes the monumental form of myth. It flows through a few select minds and comes out in the form of mysterious, autonomous, self-generating *écriture*, otherwise known as *text*, endowed with *textualité*. It breaks out everywhere and anywhere in the form of cultural codes waiting to be interpreted. *Eigentlich spricht die Sprache*. Heidegger said it all. When you reach the top of the extended ivory tower, there's no one up there, no people, just the booming echo-chamber voice of language talking to itself. I quote Joyce and Calvino."

Chuck had nodded a couple of times. "Even before I quit Penn, I noticed that the trendy graduate student in English or French never says poem or novel, work or book anymore. Everything is text, text, text. It sounds like a password, or a chant."

"Don't interrupt yet, Chuck. Now that you've got me started, you're going to have to stay still to hear my second point about the new fin de siècle. We really don't like surrendering everything to language. So in order to get back our individuality and some sense of choice in living our lives, we have had to find a new hero. Or rehabilitate an old one. Not the warrior; not the saint; not the scientist. Today our model is the actor. Almost anyone could write this section. From Oscar Wilde to Pirandello to Existentialism to the Theater of the Absurd, personal identity and authentic living have become increasingly a matter of role playing, of self-creation in situations. Sartre's *pour-soi*, for example, is a purely theatrical notion, and also a parody of it. His famous café waiter acts his role in order to assume his status, in order to become himself. 'The truth of masks' goes back at least to Stendhal and Baudelaire, to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Or read John Barth. Every character is a charlatan and revels in it. And look what's happening now in sociology and anthropology and psychotherapy. They're awash in theories of performance and social enactment and game

ENTER WITH FLOURISHES

Commotion at knee-level, down-drafts
ruffling our cuffs and the floor
jumping: WHOOSH there goes
one past our ankles.
Brace yourself, husband.
The house has babies.
Here's the bow-legged, double diapered,
swift, rudderless inheritor
staggers upright, and here's more
mewlers and creepers and soft
star-handed spitting ones, propped and stowed,
strapped—are they?—to trays, hung in nets, or
just rolling loose. Sugar tits.
Spinach. The spoken lines
for young mothers at rained-out picnics haven't changed
unless we've been around so long they've changed back again
and WHOOSH here goes
Anthropos erectus again. Nothing for it but arrange
ruffles and flourishes, trumpeting hautboys,
for our wondering homage at this grand
new human entrance again: Enter with flourishes: Again!

ANNE HALLEY

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His writings have been used in numerous style and content workshops and accredited courses at such institutions as California State University, UCLA, Fordham, University of Illinois and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Naturally, you're wondering what all this is — but I'm not going to tell you here. No, it's going to cost you ten smackers to find out. But I will tell you what it *isn't* so you'll not be off on some wild goose chase:

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— Dean F. V. Du Vall

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playing. So there's my second point. First, we drain the best of ourselves away into the collective dynamics of language, and then we try to put it back by playing roles and projecting self-images. A queer game. Of course I'm talking mostly about intellectuals trying to locate or resist the latest trends. Like me. . . . Probably no one else in this car would follow a word of this rant. What about you, Chuck?"

"Oh, I follow you. I haven't stopped being an intellectual just because I ski." Chuck made a few vague gestures. "Do you say all that in your paper?"

"Don't be ridiculous." Edgar caught the waiter's eye and ordered another round. "I feel lousy about leaving my family before the Christmas turkey's cold. I've had four drinks. I don't like what I've written in the modernism paper. I meet a former student who left the fold two years ago but seems ready to listen still. So you've just heard a juiced-up, club-car version. To tell the truth, I like it better than the original, which is pretty tame."

The car was quieter now. But the two of them had moved closer as if the noise had increased. Chuck waited, sensing that it was his turn, yet uncertain how much to say. When he spoke, the words came softly.

"You must have been saving up for a long time, Edgar. You're bursting with polemics. Something's gnawing at you. Your ideas may sound a little strange at M. L. A. And I don't understand where you stand yourself. Are you with them or against them? Who's the *we* you keep using?"

EDGAR lit another cigarette and watched the smoke he made. Everything around them was pulled from side to side in an endless series of jerks, and the two of them swayed in unison with the other passengers. "You're incorrigible, Chuck. You hear me almost too well. How can I take a stand when I'm swimming in deep waters like everyone else? That's what the *we* means. All I can do is decide what direction to swim in. Unlike most of the others I still think there is a bottom somewhere, and I haven't given up looking for it. To explain that I'll have to tell you about the part of the paper I haven't written."

Chuck laughed. "Is that why we met tonight? So I could be your audience?"

Edgar nodded and went on. The drinks had made him intense. "Funny thing is I remember this part better than the rest. I see a set of twentieth century texts—works—lined up, like points on a curve." His hands sketched it out. "Strindberg described his own *A Dream Play* by saying, 'Anything is apt to happen, anything seems possible and probable.' That was 1902. In 1925 Gide has the narrator of *The Counterfeiters* warn us that he's going to mix everything into the pot—real, imaginary, fantastic—with no holds barred. There's even a chapter about an angel! Twenty years later Borges, in an apocryphal lecture in Montevideo, proposed that fantastic fiction (meaning his own) relies on four devices: the work within the work, the contamination of reality by dream, time travel, and the double. Each one of these devices serves in some way to undermine our sense of the reality and identity of anything. When Robbe-Grillet wrote the introduction to his scenario of *Last Year at Marienbad* in 1961, he no longer bothered to treat fantasy as a separate genre. It's all one. I can quote you the key sentence by heart. 'The total film of our mental activity admits, one after another, at the same time, and without distinction, real fragments relayed by sight and hearing along with remote fragments from the past and future, or even the totally phantasmagorical.' *Without Distinction*—that's the crux of it. It means there's no way to tell the real from the imagined.

"They're all saying the same thing. It goes on and on. Having assimilated Borges and Robbe-Grillet and God knows who else, Gabriel García-Márquez created the masterpiece in the genre. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* everything begins in reality and ends in fantasy. You can watch it happen. The natural gives birth to the supernatural, the surreal—with no detectable shift in style or tone. Believe or disbelieve the events at your own risk. It's like an unstoppable roller-coaster—but we're not supposed to get dizzy! Just let it all flow by.

"Do you see the curve now? Language has assumed the throne. It asserts its sovereignty in a universe of signs that owes no loyalty of correspondence or plausibility to a prior *reality*. For there is no reality, no natural world against which to measure the inventions of language. We are free to play with words and ideas and situations as we will—with strict rules or no rules. Result: a genre that I call the metaphysical picaresque. It's everywhere. Soon it will drive out all other forms, like bamboo in the lawn. And you can see what it adds up to. Each one of these works of the metaphysical picaresque devises its own particular re-enactment of *Don Quixote*—but with one major difference. Sancho Panza has been eliminated—gagged or kidnapped or killed outright. Without his voice of sanity and reality, all modes of existence can claim equal status. And they do—*without distinction*. We seem to want that. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* pleases everyone just by the way it keeps on overflowing the pot and outdistancing reality. The more a work makes us lose our orientation, our sense of constraints, the more we praise it. The metaphysical picaresque. There. Now, you've heard it. My palaver is over."

Edgar leaned back, but he didn't subside. He looked at Chuck with a mixture of defiance and sheepishness. The train was drifting through the darkness, neither fast nor slow, neither accelerating nor braking. The waiter announced that the bar would close after the stop at White River Junction. Chuck looked at his watch: past midnight. He began to talk as the scanty lights of White River floated across the huge windows, and they both rocked forward slightly as the brakes tightened.

"IF THAT'S what you didn't write, let me try to tell you *why*. You know, we got some of that in your seminar on narrative. You were fighting with yourself for a whole semester, and you even used the term 'metaphysical picaresque' once. Then dropped it. I think you've stopped short of the final step. That's why you haven't written it out. But you must have seen where you were headed. Remember when you made us go back and read the tenth book of the *Republic*, and Aristotle's *On Interpretation*? You spent half the next class talking about modalities.' You said that Plato's vertical scheme of ideas at the top of diminishing levels of imitation was absorbed into Aristotle's horizontal scheme of logical categories or modalities. Four of them: the impossible, the possible, the contingent, the necessary. You said it has taken us 3,000 years to learn that true wisdom consists in discriminating adequately among these modalities and in living accordingly. The philosophers and thinkers of every age have rearranged the modalities a little and sometimes changed their names. The latest major revision is Freud's. He reduced them to two: the reality principle and the pleasure principle. A little like Plato's two horses in the *Phaedrus*.

"Up to here it's your thinking. This is where the connection comes. You

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must have made it. The modalities have to be prior to language. To put language first runs the risk of destroying the modalities."

As Edgar listened, his eyes shone. With his open right hand he made the self-effacing gesture that invites another person to go first through a doorway. Chuck paused, smiling at the invitation, and then went on.

"The metaphysical picaresque sets 3,000 years of hard-earned philosophical thought on its head and jettisons the modalities as irrelevant. Anything goes. Playtime of the arbitrary and the autonomous. There are no fundamental distinctions. Dream has contaminated all domains. We cannot locate anyone for sure, least of all ourselves, because a double lurks in every corner. The work of art doesn't refer to a recognizable reality but gives away under our feet to an infinite regress of embedded works and interior reflections. A bottomless abysm of art. You quoted Strindberg: 'Anything is possible and probable.' No modalities for him. And Robbe-Grillet was talking about using all the modalities 'without distinction.' Same difference. They abandon the long struggle to separate appearance and reality, fact and fiction. Someone else will do that—the philosophers maybe, or the reader, if he survives.

"But. . . ." Chuck's forefinger rose as high as the top of his head in his most forceful gesture yet, and he continued, "we shouldn't be taken in. All those metaphysical picaros are dependent on the rest of us bourgeois philistines to keep reality and modalities in place. That way they can play with them, deface them. The language creationists and the writers climbing the ivory tower aren't a real opposition ready to take power after a struggle and occupy all literature. Their 'adversary intention' has careful limits. They want to sustain the bad-boy status and the appearance of daring and danger. In order to do so, they need an antagonist strong enough to make them look like the underdog. It's a recognized form of parasitism. Maybe symbiosis if you look closely. Since we value deviation and discrepancy, some norm must exist. Otherwise how could we identify a deviation? It's elementary. The modernist picaros need their host-adversary in order to feed on it and scoff at it; the host needs lots of kicks and pricks to stay alert. Maybe it's a healthy situation.

"The trouble is, no one will stay in position." Chuck had found his voice now. The train was swaying heavily as it gathered speed out of White River, and a last round of drinks stood untouched in front of them. Chuck went on, "You talked about a higher ivory tower, where the modalities no longer hold, where there's no telling the difference between the phantasmagorical, the contingent, the real, the necessary. Okay. That's your new fin de siècle. But when pressed, these new decadents reverse themselves. They won't stay put. I remember that Robbe-Grillet passage you quote about mixing all types of fragment without distinction. But he goes on and claims in defense of *Marienbad* that this total film is also the most faithful, the 'truest' account available of our ordinary affective life. Those are almost his words. It's not a higher ivory tower anymore. It's a deeper slice of life. Gide makes the same claim somewhere about *The Counterfeiters* I think. From fantasy unleashed to improved realism. They confound themselves. Of course, it may be their secret weapon, their double whammy. They will win both ways if

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we don't watch them closely."

Edgar shook his head slowly. A crooked smile creased one side of his face all the way back to the ear. "You should never have left us, Chuck. Just look at what you can do. You run circles around me using my own ideas. Maybe you should stand in for me tomorrow. It's uncanny. I started following up that parasite argument too, but I came out in a different clearing. There was a line I just hated not using. 'All well-brought-up modernists are conservationist in dealing with the physical environment, and strip-miners in dealing with the intellectual environment.' I'll have to keep it in the freezer.

"But listen, Chuck. Some happy fate must have brought us together. You may not believe it but I had forgotten all about the business of the modalities. It sounded pretentious when I tried to lay it out in class. If I remember right I got no response at all, no excited note-taking or questions. I guess I suppressed it. Now you turn up like a messenger of the gods in disguise and supply me with the missing link in my own argument about language creationism and the confusions of the metaphysical picaresque. Modalities . . . of course . . . still . . ."

For a time Edgar became perfectly quiet in his chair, except for his eyes. They moved restlessly across the blackness of the window that hid the landscape, probing its seeming depths, ignoring the flattened reflections of the car on the surface. Chuck waited and let Edgar pick up the thread of his own thought.

"Still, I can't hold too steadfastly to the modalities and refuse to admit works that blur the borders. I'd be violating my own tastes and instincts, which is where we have to start. Cross-contamination may sometimes be necessary. If I take the modality argument all the way, what becomes of *Gargantua?* or *In Praise of Folly?* or *Faust?* or *Ubu Roi?* I can't sacrifice them to a principle. They are a principle in themselves. Even Corneille knew you have to break the rules. *'Les grands sujets vont toujours au delà du vrai semblable.'* The great subjects always exceed the limits of the plausible. I think that's why I haven't been able to write this part. I still couldn't even with the modalities added. I'd be locking myself into a theory—a theory I believe but cannot systematically apply."

"I think you could handle that." Chuck's voice sounded both detached and insistent. "That's not why you can't write this part. It's because you accepted an impossible subject."

"What do you mean?"

"Modernism," Chuck said. "It goes nowhere. It's a dud. Look what it makes you do, or keeps you from doing. Look what it makes me try to do."

For the first time Edgar looked a little nettled. "You're supposed to say, look at the heights it's carried you to."

CHUCK didn't yield. "You asked me to play the critic. Don't call me off. I can just see the program of your panel. 'Modernism and the Strategies of Desire,' 'Tolstoy, or the Closet Modernist.' 'The Modern, Modernism, Post-Modernism, Modernismo, Modernization, Modernité, Merdonité—a Trial Taxonomy.' Something like that? Look, Edgar, it's all makework, an exercise in nomenclature with no grounding in compelling events or works. Modernism is not a meaningful category of literary history or art history. It's a feather bed for critics and professors, an endlessly renewable pretext for scholars to hold conferences, devise special numbers, and gloss each other's works into powder. You talk about the metaphysical picaresque. Where will Sancho Panza be during tomorrow's M.L.A. panel? Bound and gagged in the coat room."

For some time Edgar had been inching forward to the edge of his chair and he held his hands in front of him waiting to make a gesture. He broke in before Chuck had finished. "Modernism is not a period, like the Victorian era. It's not a proper school or movement, like Surrealism. It has no geographic character or associations, like Der Blaue Reiter. It serves no heuristic purpose, like Baroque or Imagism. It's the weakest term we've had since Symbolism, which even Verlaine mocked by spelling it with a *c* and an *a*. But best of all, worst of all "—Edgar paused long enough to finish his drink and make an aborted move toward standing up—"modernism embodies a disabling contradiction. It has cancer. The only general characteristic of the modern era is the celebration of individual experience, of particular feelings in particular circumstances, not repeatable. Every epiphany is sui generis. The term modernism tries to make a category of items that will not fit into a category. . . ."

Edgar waved instead of finishing. They were both planing now, half dancing in their seats while the nearly empty car rumbled through the dark. Chuck took his turn happily.

"See, if you can't have a real category, you palm off a negative category on me, a phony. It must be the teacher in you, Edgar. You can't survive without a cubbyhole. That's all we're talking about, isn't it? Cubbyholes? Like the metaphysical picaresque. Listen. I have a series of quotes for you. At least one I got from you. I must have been saving them up for tonight. First Ortega: 'Man has no nature. What he has is history.' Emerson was there waiting for him: 'Properly speaking there is no such thing as history. There is only biography.' And E.H. Gombrich coming in to meet them: 'There is really no such thing as art. There are only artists.' And finally, to stitch it all together, Chuck McDennis: 'There is no such thing as modernism. There are only professors talking about it in order to keep their tenure in the culture.' Try that on your colleagues tomorrow!"

Chuck's voice had remained buoyant, with no edge of bitterness or mockery. But Edgar's grin faded into a quizzical frown. The pause was almost awkward.

"Is that what made you quit Chuck?"

It was a little while before Chuck lifted his eyes from his drink and looked evenly at Edgar.

"I guess so. At the time I didn't know what I was doing. But I couldn't stand the way literary works got lined up and systematized and left behind in most graduate courses—sometimes just ignored in favor of criticism and critical theory. Everything is a strategy. Even you worried me sometimes. I remember one day you referred to a book called *The Armed Vision*. I never read it. I don't know who wrote it or what it's about. But the title came to stand for everything I wanted to fight. I suppose it got mixed up with the antiwar, antimilitary demonstrations at the time. For a while I was going to write you a paper with the title, 'The Disarmed Vision.' My manifesto. Oh, I had lots of ammunition. . . . Dammit, there's the military metaphor again."

They both laughed briefly. When Ed-

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gar spoke, his tone was relaxed again. "Aren't you pushing us professors a little hard? We know modernism is a makeshift. But feather bed—that goes too far. We all need handles on things—genres, names, cubbyholes, strategies. Students especially. They get desperate without clear reference points. You know that."

Chuck leaned forward. His young face carried more intensity now than Edgar's. "Don't always try to say as much as you know, Edgar. At least not in that direction, not toward abstraction and classification. You must have some wonderful things in your paper, believe me, but it sounds as if they get lost, buried. All that modernism framework carries you further and further away from individual writers. What did you say about García-Márquez? Everything starts in reality and ends in fantasy? That's fine. You can do something with that, something much more important than tucking *One Hundred Years* into a little subcategory of modernism. Show us what he does and how. You're good at that. No big schemes, no systems of signification. You were best in class when you got warmed up and just read aloud with a few running comments. Why did you always apologize after you did that? Once when you were reading Blake to us I thought you'd had a few too many drinks before the seminar. But it was great."

EDGAR GRINNED before he spoke and raised his glass. "The drinks were tonight. We should be reading Blake. Or Emily Dickinson. I think you fell in love with her, no? . . . Do you ever think of starting again?"

Chuck raised his glass and held it up for a moment in silence. "You remind me of the story you told us yourself I think about Emerson visiting Thoreau when Thoreau was in prison for refusing to pay his income tax. I always use it when people ask me why I let my beard grow. Emerson said, 'What are you doing in there, Henry?' And Thoreau answered very gently, 'What are you doing out there, Ralph?' " Then Chuck shook his head and moved his arm as if to block something. "No, that's not right. I think we're in the right places now. You were born to teach and to be troubled by teaching. I'm made, or have made myself maybe, to stay behind the woodwork and make a scratching noise every so often, like tonight. We couldn't improve on the situation." Chuck finally put down his glass.

"But now listen to this. It's your turn not to believe me. I've been looking for an author to write a book for which I have chosen the title. The unseemly schemes of a junior editor. But I'm serious. As you probably know, Proudhon attacked Marx in a book with the title *The Philosophy of Poverty, La Philosophie de la Misère.* Marx roared back in French with *The Poverty of Philosophy.* André Breton picked up the exchange in a surrealist-political diatribe he called *The Poverty of Poetry.* Recently E. P. Thompson, the English neo-Marxist, has denounced everyone in sight with *The Poverty of Theory.* So I figure the scene is set and the time has come for a definitive polemic called *The Poverty of Modernism.* I've been looking for a year. No luck. No serious candidates. But now you've just delivered yourself unwittingly into my hands, haven't you? May I send you a contract next week when I get back to Boston? From what you've said, the book is already half-written. I can't understand why I didn't think of you right away. Suppression? Censorship? But why?"

"Maybe because you didn't want to admit to yourself that I could do it only with your help, Chuck. Well, ask me again after the M. L. A. I'll rewrite my paper tomorrow, using some of this." Edgar raised both his palms. "Something ought to come of it."

The windows in the car looked like a bank of dark, oversize TV screens. Only an occasional blip of light in the countryside wandered across the empty scopes and disappeared off the opposite edge. It would be twenty minutes before the brakes clenched again for Bellows Falls.

THE MAESTRO'S MAGIC

Stokowski: A Counterpoint of View
by Oliver Daniel

(Dodd, Mead, 1090 pp., $24.95)

Before there was Leonard Bernstein, or Herbert von Karajan, there was Leopold Stokowski—the "Barnum of Music," the spectacular showman who was, for something like thirty years of his long career, the most famous conductor in the world. Toscanini and Furtwängler may have been more revered by serious musicians, but it was Stokowski who played to the popular imagination. He had three wives—Olga Samaroff (née Lucie Hickenlooper), a concert pianist and famous pedagogue; Evangeline Johnson, heiress to the Johnson & Johnson fortune; and, last and most glamorous of all, Gloria Vanderbilt. (He was 63 years old when they married; she was 21.) He had a much-publicized fling with Greta Garbo. He took his Philadelphia Orchestra to Hollywood in 1936. Three years later, he conducted them in Walt Disney's phenomenally successful "Fantasia"—and even shook hands with Mickey Mouse. Wherever he went, there were adoring fans, huge audiences and, more often than not, a single dramatic spotlight on the celebrated Stokowski hands. As Stravinsky (who was no match for Stokowski on a podium) once said, it was Stokowski who had created the "popular image of conducting as a kind of legerdemain."

But there was a serious Stokowski beneath the dapper suits, the exotic accent (he was born and raised in England but affected a Slavic accent to go with his Polish ancestry) and the ruthlessly opportunistic behavior. This Stokowski vigorously championed contemporary music, to the point of jeopardizing season ticket sales for his various orchestras. The first major conductor to interest himself in technology, he introduced millions of Americans to serious music through his radio broadcasts and myriad recordings. He helped found and support several youth orchestras; in 1940, he took his All-American Youth Orchestra on a tour of South America. Above all, there was the Philadelphia Orchestra, which Stokowski headed from 1912 to 1938 and which he changed from a third-rate provincial group to what is still, four decades later, one of the best sounding orchestras in the world. Even Stravinsky admired Stokowski's extraordinary ability to mold ninety musicians into a lustrous-sounding whole. "No conductor has been as good an orchestra-builder," he wrote of Stokowski, "from basic sticks and stones to chromium plate."

What better subject for a biographer, then, than a rakish superstar conductor

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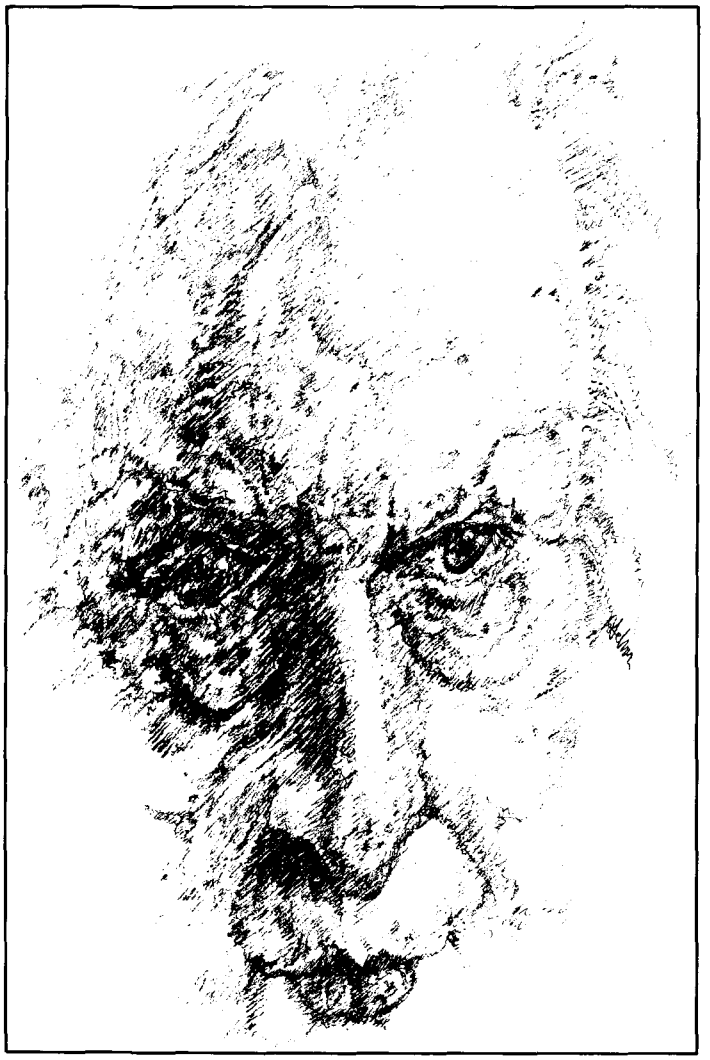
with redeeming virtues? Alas: Stokowski slips through the pages, sighted but never really seen, in this huge, overly partisan and ultimately tedious biography by Oliver Daniel, a former broadcast executive and Stokowski acquaintance. In part, the fault is Stokowski's. Excessively secret, he never kept a diary (other than cryptic markings in a datebook) and resisted all attempts by would-be biographers in his lifetime. Most of the fault, however, rests with Daniel. Desperate to pin down the elusive Stokowski, he makes the classic mistake of burying his subject beneath the facts. We are told what Stokowski programmed on such and such a night, what (in endless detail) the critics said, when and where he went on vacation each year, even what he wore on major occasions. What it was like to be Leopold Stokowski—or what, in the end, he meant to music—is never really addressed. Daniel doesn't attempt to analyze or evaluate, only to report—leaving the reader with the uncomfortable sensation of always being at arm's length from the conductor. Even the anecdotes that Daniel has gathered from "Stoki's" friends and acquaintances seem strangely stiff and superficial.

Still, this exhaustive biography comes at a welcome time, for revisionist history has not been kind to Stokowski. In the past few decades, the music world has deified Toscanini. Just the opposite, meanwhile, has happened to Stokowski. He has been demoted and dismissed as the "Hollywood" conductor. Musical devotees deplore his "reorchestration" of scores and roll their eyes in horror at his transcriptions of Bach. To some extent, they are right; Stokowski stood, as Kurt Blaukopf wrote in *The Great Conductors*, "just at the crossroads between titanic genius and commercial musical businessman." Yet Stokowski represents a far more interesting and emblematic figure than the revisionists suggest. For better or worse, he was the first of today's superstar conductors. He made classical music news, and he made it pay. What's more, he often made it beautiful; his musical interpretations could be as dignified and moving as they were, occasionally, crass. Stokowski's legacy, in short, is something to be seriously addressed.

Unlike many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century conductors, Stokowski's musical credentials were unimpeachable. He was admitted to the Royal College of Music at 13, where he studied with Walford Davies and Sir Charles Stanford, and at 16 was elected to the Royal College of Organists, an all-but-unheard-of honor for one so young. By 20, he was organist and choir director of historic St. James Church in Piccadilly; by 23, he had moved on to the even more upper crust St. Bartholomew's Church in New York, the parish of the Astors and Morgans and the other Fifth Avenue tycoons. His rise as a conductor was equally meteoric. He took over the Cincinnati Symphony on the strength of several concerts that he had conducted in Europe—and because of some shrewd manuevering by his first wife Olga. Two years later, it was evident that he had already outgrown Cincinnati. He began to lobby again. This time the prize was Philadelphia; in the end, he prevailed. At 30, Stokowski was head of one of the most important orchestras in America.



LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI BY DAVID SCHORR

For the next half-century, it seems, Stokowski was rarely out of the news. He was always "playing a role," as one friend told Daniel—and the more controversial the better. He lectured audiences from the podium about their distracting behavior. He made sweeping ideological statements to the press about peace and universal brotherhood. Then there was the moment, during the glittering farewell performance in the old Metropolitan Opera House in New York, when he turned on the podium and announced, "What a beautiful house. What splendid acoustics! I hope you're going to help us save this magnificent building." Met officials, who had pushed for years to get a new house, nearly died.

Stokowski's urge to be different and controversial doubtless spurred his interest in contemporary music. (As more than one critic has pointed out, Stokowski conducted far fewer second performances than he did premieres.) Whatever the reasons, however, the list of new works he performed is incredible. He gave the U.S. premieres of both *The Rite of Spring* and Berg's *Wozzeck*. In 1916 he wangled an extra $14,000 from Philadelphia supporters to present Mahler's Eighth Symphony, the "Symphony of a Thousand." He programmed Shostakovich and Schoenberg and works by Ruggles, Griffes, and Harris, among a host of Americans. The now-famous "electronic" concert at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in which an audience heard, for the first time, taped music without live performers, was headed by Stokowski. In his later years, he discovered the Eastern-inspired music of Colin McPhee, which has had such an important influence on today's "minimalist"

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composers, and that of Charles Ives. As he rightly said, when New York City presented him with its "Handel" medal for musical distinction in 1963, they should have given him an "Ives" medal instead.

Just how Stokowski achieved his famous "Stokowski sound"—he was, first and last, a master colorist—remains a mystery. But some of the most interesting quotes in Daniel's biography are clues. Denis Vaughan, a musician in the Royal Philharmonic, recalls how Stokowski prolonged bass notes in Debussy's music in order to achieve the blurred, shimmering effect that Debussy himself had created on the piano. Again, recalls Vaughan, Stokowski began and ended crescendos and diminuendos by having only the last desk players in each section play: "By spacing the players out so far away, it gave a whole new perspective to the sound, so that it really disappeared right into the distance and came from nothing to the full crescendo." Conductor Neville Marriner, then a double-bass player, recalls Stokowski's use of free bowing—in which each string player bows independently, rather than trying to duplicate each other's up-and-down strokes—and his way of building sound from the basses up. "He got an enormous fat sound from the bottom and it was just one of those infectious things; if you get a heavy bass sound then the cellos respond, their instruments sound better and the middle sounds better," says Marriner.

IN HIS LAST decades Stokowski "acquired the advantages and benisons of age rather than its infirmities," as Max de Schauensee, a Philadelphia critic whom Daniel quotes here, once wrote. He made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera at 78, founded the American Symphony Orchestra at 80 and guest-conducted the Boston Symphony for the first time at 82. Even after he began to fail physically, music revived him. As one observer remarked of the then-feeble old man, Stokowski "sighted the music as a navigator in distress sights land on the horizon." Except for a few rare concerts, he stopped conducting in public in his early nineties, because of weakening vision. But he recorded to the end. (His last contract, with CBS, ran through his 100th birthday.) While most conductors' tempi tend to slow down as they grow older, Stokowski's speeded up. Some of his best recordings, such as a marvelously rhythmic, driving version of

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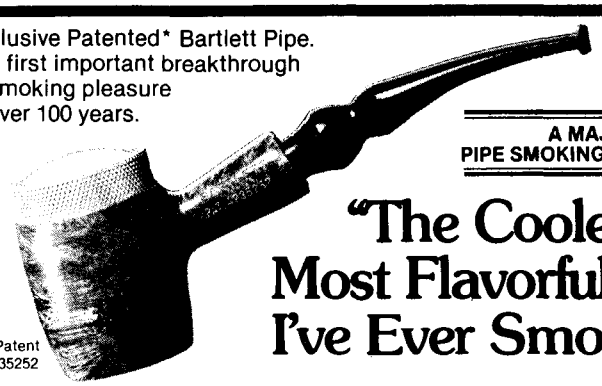

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Brahms's Second Symphony, come from those final years.

In the end, what emerges from Daniel's biography is the portrait of an artist who was selfish, secretive, hopelessly vain, charming when he wanted to be—and who got men and women to play like angels. As Glenn Gould once said, "Stokowski was, for want of a better word, an ecstatic." Perhaps the best insight here is that of Rosalyn Tureck, the pianist and Bach scholar. "We must remember that Stokowski was an organist of the romantic school," she told Daniel. "He played the orchestra as a nineteenth-century organ. . . ." That, I think, is the real key to Stokowski. Above all, he was a romantic. Born into a Europe that still echoed with the larger than life playing of Paderewski and Liszt, and trained in the virtuosic style favored by nineteenth-century organists, he retained throughout life his love for the rich, sumptuous, majestic sound of an organ in full cry. At his worst, in music not suited to the full-dress treatment, he could be guilty of horrible excesses—of "technicolored" Bach, as one critic labeled a performance, or of rococo Mozart. ("You must realize that Beethoven and Brahms did not understand instrumentation," he once loftily pronounced.) At his best, however, in the big romantic works that he loved, he could give stupendous performances, full of spontaneity and emotional intensity. Speaking to a group of college students in 1963, Stokowski said, "You will, I think, notice . . . that during the next ten years there will be mechanical perfection without that inner spiritual message which is the essential and deep thing of music—mystery, imagination, impulsiveness. . . ." For the last twenty years, we have had a lot of that mechanical perfection and note-perfect playing. Of the Stokowski brand of magic and mystery, however, we have had very little.

ANNALYN SWAN

Annalyn Swan is *Newsweek*'s music critic.

TROUBLE ON THE LEFT

A Better World
The Great Schism: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals
by William L. O'Neill

(Simon and Schuster, 447 pp., $17.95)

"There is . . . a time for the evening under lamplight/(the evening with the photograph album)," wrote T. S. Eliot in *East Coker*. This book has provided me with such an evening: its story opens at exactly the beginning of my own political and intellectual self-education at the age of 15 when I started to read *The Nation* and THE NEW REPUBLIC a few weeks after World War II began. The Stalin-Hitler pact that set the stage for the war led to "the great schism" over Stalinism that is O'Neill's subject. For twenty years, except during the wartime alliance after Hitler's invasion of Russia, it remained the central political issue for American left-wing intellectuals. Even today, it lives on as at least a presence in the background of much contemporary discussion. Stalinism, as O'Neill notes, was the name preferred by the initially small small but steadily increasing numbers of intellectuals who became aware through the 1940s of the totalitarian essence of the Soviet regime, an awareness that by now is nearly universal even among old-timers and their ideological offspring who continue to be defensive about past illusions and unforgiving toward the anti-Stalinists who "prematurely" exposed them.

Professor O'Neill, a historian at Rutgers, traces this impassioned debate through a succession of different journals, most of which I once read avidly, eventually becoming a contributor to many of them myself. Hence my sense of looking at ocher snapshots of half-forgotten family gatherings, also some of the *longueurs* that inevitably accompany such an activity. I should like to be able to claim that I read the two "liberal weeklies" less regularly after 1941 out of disgust for all those effusions about "the people's war," "the century of the common man," and the simple, virtuous Soviet leader so at one with his fellow citizens that it was slanderous, suggesting even Fascist leanings, to call him a dictator. Yet actually it was only when I read Orwell and Koestler and discovered *Partisan Review* in the last year of the war that I experienced the full sense of moral outrage that animated the anti-Stalinist left, which had for so long been an isolated and beleaguered minority.

MY EARLIER reading of *The Nation* and THE NEW REPUBLIC during the twenty-two months of the Nazi-Soviet alliance undoubtedly created, however, a receptivity to the anti-Stalinist case. O'Neill's opening chapter reports the abandonment by both journals of Popular Front illusions after the pact and their unqualified condemnation of the Soviet attack on Finland; also, their increasing advocacy of American intervention, especially when Britain stood alone after the fall of France. Both journals gave a lot of space to the fustian moralizing of Archibald MacLeish, Lewis Mumford, and Waldo Frank, who railed against the "decadence" and loss of faith of American intellectuals for failing to press for instant and total involvement in the war against Hitler. O'Neill is properly critical of these rhetorical excesses, but concludes that "the progressive weeklies had done all they could to aid Britain and prepare Americans for war. And they had done so for the most part honorably." After June 1941, however, the Popular Front was reborn and "the progressive weeklies would revert to type, sacrificing honesty once more upon the altar of hope."

O'Neill mentions a late 1939 NEW REPUBLIC article by Vincent Sheean whose title, "The Soviet Union as a Fascist State," helps explain why some of us found the furor last year over Susan Sontag's speech on Poland so depressingly stale, conceding that her views were essentially right and that she showed courage in expressing them before that particular audience. I also recall articles in *The Nation* in 1940 by Granville Hicks and a three-part series by Lewis Corey that went well beyond denouncing Stalin to diagnose the germs of Stalinism not only in Leninism but in Marxism itself. I did not know then that Corey was Louis Fraina, the leader of the first American Communist Party, recently portrayed in

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the movie *Reds*—or misportrayed, Theodore Draper assures me, for he grew up in Brooklyn with no trace of an Italian accent. Corey argued that there was "a totalitarian potential in socialism" rooted in its unification of political and economic power, a phrase and argument that I have remembered now for over forty years. Democratic Socialists who identify Socialism with decentralization, workers' control or *autogestion* and the retention of the market mechanism have grasped the point. Yet it still needs to be urged upon the burgeoning breed of post-60s Marxists in academic life who, remote from any real politics, avoid terms such as "totalitarian" like the plague and sidestep any discussion of existing Socialist states beyond expressing fleeting sympathies for a few that are not under direct Soviet control. For that matter, today's *Nation* could stand a bit of reinstruction in Corey's thesis.

O'NEILL's first seven chapters are chronologically organized, covering the period of the pact, the war, the revival of anti-Stalinism (when the war seemed won and it became evident that the magnitude of the Soviet terror and labor camp system had been greatly underestimated in the 1930s even by Trotsky), the beginnings of the cold war, Henry Wallace's ill-fated Presidential candidacy, and the final "eclipse of progressivism" with the outbreak of the Korean War. Enter McCarthyism as a new, seemingly eternal issue that has ever since overshadowed the earlier terms of debate. Here O'Neill wisely shifts to a topical approach with separate chapters on the blacklist in the entertainment industry, the polemics over the "loss" of China, and two on the interminable controversies within the intellectual and academic communities over liberal complicity with Stalinism and the scope of civil liberties. O'Neill's detailed summary ends in the 1950s, but he includes a chapter reviewing the numerous memoirs and retrospectives of the McCarthy years published in the past decade after the anti-Vietnam movement and Watergate had created a new audience critical of all forms of anti-Communism though little disposed to revive the old sentiments of affection toward the Soviet Union.

O'Neill's major source is the periodical press. After the war, *The Nation* and THE NEW REPUBLIC lost their former preeminent position within the liberal intellectual world to a variety of resolutely anti-Stalinist journals. *Commentary, The Reporter,* Dwight Macdonald's *Politics* and, at a later date, *Dissent* began publication. *Partisan Review* reached its peak of prestige. *The New Leader,* which maintained an informed anti-Stalinist outlook of Menshevik origins antedating even the Trotskyist press, broke out of its long isolation. O'Neill supplements his survey of these magazines with summaries of widely discussed books and concise political and ideological biographies of the major writers involved in the debate. There are photographs of many of them —the book is not merely a figurative album!—including Freda Kirchwey, Dwight Macdonald, Edmund Wilson, Philip Rahv, Laski, and Orwell from across the Atlantic; I.F. Stone, Max Lerner, F.O. Matthiessen, Reinhold Niebuhr, Sidney Hook, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Owen Lattimore, Mary McCarthy (also Joseph!), Lillian Hellman, and Diana Trilling. There is even a vista of a 1947 rally on Capitol Hill in support of the H.U.A.C. investigation of the Hollywood Ten that shows a lanky Ronald Reagan waving at the press photographers.

O'Neill also draws on several collections of private letters and unpublished papers by leading dramatis personae, such as Kirchwey, Macdonald, Lerner, Matthiessen, Malcolm Cowley, and Upton Sinclair. These reveal conclusively that long before the cold war and the Red scare the liberal apologists for Stalinism were privately conceding and even agonizing over painful truths about its brutalities that they continued to deny publicly, often imputing discreditable motives to fellow intellectuals who revealed them. Now and then O'Neill's citing of other people's notes about wordy and passionate meetings may have resulted in errors of detail and misidentifications of just who said what on which proposed motions. But in general his faithful and laborious reporting of the printed record produces as accurate a one-volume account as we are likely to have for a very long time of the opinions over two crucial decades of the leading American intellectuals on all major domestic and international events pertaining to Communism and the Soviet Union.

Several distinctions emerge from this record that were blurred both at the time and in the post-new left climate that has recently encouraged so much self-serving rewriting of the past. O'Neill clearly differentiates between devout and per-

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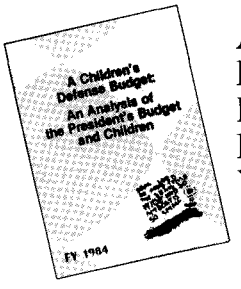

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sistent fellow travelers of the Communist Party and those he calls "progressives," their own preferred label and that of their heirs today. These categories widely overlapped before 1948; the progressives were by no means the innocent idealists they claimed, but it is an error to equate them in the fashion of the irresponsible Red-hunters of the 1950s and, as O'Neill does not fail to observe, of some of the more obsessive anti-Stalinist intellectuals, embittered by their long isolation. O'Neill sees the Wallace campaign and the Korean War as "acid tests" that eventually separated progressives and steadfast fellow travelers, noting that both *The Nation* and THE NEW REPUBLIC supported Truman in 1948 and U.S. intervention in Korea two years later, even though Wallace himself had been editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC before announcing his candidacy. Both journals were denounced as cowards and sellouts by the shrinking fellow-traveling press, which soldiered on for a few more years until Khrushchev's secret speech reduced the American C.P. itself to a sect scarcely larger than those of its old blood foes, the Trotskyists. This, however, is peripheral to O'Neill's main story, which concentrates on the ideological history of the progressives.

THE NEW REPUBLIC never looked back and became the liberal democratic (upper-case optional) organ it has remained. *The Nation*, on the other hand, under two editors since Kirchwey, often reads today like an alumni journal for old Communists, fellow travelers, and unrepentant progressives. Yet even it, as O'Neill justly remarks, "though still flying old flags and fighting old battles, is more self-critical than before." One sometimes senses that the editors would like to move in new directions but are restrained by the sentiments of much of their readership. Lately *The Nation* has printed a rash of indignant letters attacking the journal for its "blind" anti-Sovietism, allegedly giving aid and comfort to the reactionary Reagan Administration. There is evidently a large pool of unreconstructed Stalinists still around, their numbers swelled by younger recruits from the failed leftist movements of the 1960s. They seem to turn out in force for such *Nation*-sponsored affairs as its summer tours of the Soviet Union, last year's writers' congress in New York, and the rally at which Susan Sontag was booed for saying that Communism and Fascism were twins.

O'Neill's judiciousness is apparent in his discussion of the accusations and harassment to which those who favored the Chinese Communists over the Kuomintang were subjected in the early 1950s. Many of them, including some who shared the general world view of the pro-Soviet progressives, were authentic experts on China rather than ideologues, and their forecasts of the Sino-Soviet split and of revolutionary ferment in Asia were vindicated by events. This was clearly true of the State Department Chinese specialists driven from office and of writers like John Fairbank and Theodore White excluded for years from the mass-circulation press. But it also applied with qualification to Owen Lattimore, who became a cause célèbre, hounded by McCarthy himself, the McCarran Committee, and the Justice Department, and excessively criticized by some anti-Stalinists for no more than disingenuousness about his published pro-Soviet opinions in the past. O'Neill concludes that real Asian experts as well as informed "Asia-oriented progressives" were ruined through "guilt by association with the larger progressive community" and that Vietnam was to some extent a legacy of this misbegotten episode.

AFTER THE DECLINE of fellow traveling, the question of whether or not McCarthyism was an evil equal to or even greater than Stalinism became the dominant issue it remains today—still, alas, usually posed in these impossibly crude and misleading terms. The American Committee for Cultural Freedom emerged as the major voice and forum of the anti-Stalinist intellectuals in the early 1950s. O'Neill draws on the notes and letters of Dwight Macdonald to describe the impassioned debate within the A.C.C.F. over how much it should redirect its energies to oppose McCarthyism in addition to the increasingly unpopular Stalinist apologetics it had been created to fight. Macdonald was a leader of the faction most outraged by McCarthyism. O'Neill's reliance on him, as well as other sources he uses, plainly reveals the failure of many anti-Stalinists to realize just how rapidly and completely their old adversaries had been discredited by events at a time when anti-Communism, in Philip Rahv's words, had "virtually become the official creed of our society." O'Neill does not hesitate to draw a parallel between the anti-anti-McCarthyism of some A.C.C.F. stalwarts and the anti-anti-Communism of the surviving progressives. (I myself declined an invitation to join the A.C.C.F. for just this reason.)

But the record also fails to substantiate the charges leveled so widely in recent years at the A.C.C.F. and several of its leading figures for allegedly remaining "silent" about McCarthyism or even supporting it. The few right-wing intellectuals who had joined the A.C.C.F. resigned when it sponsored a book attacking McCarthy (though the terms of the authors' opposition were, some of us thought at the time, unduly restrictive). Sidney Hook initiated several A.C.C.F. actions defending victims of the Red scare. And he did not, as was later claimed, advocate firing all Communist teachers; he tried to elaborate a systematic procedure for dealing with the issue by the universities themselves, which, though certainly open to criticism, was an honest effort to neutralize the Red-hunters. Even Irving Kristol in his "infamous" *Commentary* article on Communists and civil liberties, which, as O'Neill notes, displayed excessive "fondness for intellectual combat and verbal overkill," did not covertly endorse McCarthy, for Kristol wrote that the Senator's demagoguery "may well have been aiming a blow against independence of mind and nonconformity of spirit." The A.C.C.F. was never meant "to function as an A.C.L.U. of culture," O'Neill concludes.

> Its most active members never intended that it should. They believed that the danger to cultural freedom came first from Stalinists, later from McCarthyites. They fought both, and, despite lapses of judgment and taste, their record was better than critics have been willing to admit.

ONE FEELS immense gratitude to O'Neill for having faithfully reported a record that has been the subject of so much mythmaking. Nor does he shrink from judgment. He sticks close to the immediate issues under debate at all times, avoiding excessive psychologizing or motive-mongering, and his verdicts are pithy, balanced, and expressed with wit and economy. Inevitably, they largely uphold the anti-Stalinists:

> The question of which side actually had the better case is not hard to answer. Stalinists, and to a degree progressives also, maintained that the end justified the means, and they constantly employed the double standard to advance it. Liberal and left-wing anti-Stalinists, in contrast, were more scrupulous. Though they sometimes went too far . . . they tried even so to act consistently and on principle.

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In a footnote appended to the last statement, O'Neill adds: "This does not apply to anti-Communists as a whole, who were often as bad as American Communists, even if in a better cause."

Would that we might now be done with this overworked subject! Not bloody likely, I'm afraid. The reviewer of *A Better World* for *The New York Times Book Review* has already accused O'Neill of writing a polemic animated by neoconservative prejudices and has repeated the claims of the revisionist writers of the 1970s, which he implies are now the accepted canon among historians, although he later insists that the time has not yet come for a "dispassionate analysis" of "the age of McCarthy." The reviewer, a Harvard historian, not only gets the year of the Stalin-Hitler pact wrong, but asserts that only three cases of Soviet espionage were ever revealed during the Red scare—Fuchs, Hiss, and the Rosenbergs, the last two "still the subject of fierce controversy." What about Nunn May, Gold, Greenglass, Sobell, Coplon, Wadleigh, Field and, if self-revelations count, Chambers, Bentley, Massing, Weyl—to name only undisputed cases that immediately come to mind? Not that the Soviet spy cases caused, let alone justified, McCarthyism—there were such cases in Britain and Canada too, but no Red scares. Alan Brinkley's review, however, confirms O'Neill's wry remark that the wish of new left scholars to revise the liberal version of the recent past "led to the writing of much bad history" that stands in need of correction.

BRINKLEY also unintentionally confirms O'Neill's rejection of the insistence by veteran anti-Stalinists turned neoconservative that contemporary liberalism has scarcely changed at all since the bad old days of the 1930s and 1940s. For to link anti-Stalinist views to neoconservatism is surely an improvement over calling them "objectively fascist," or even claiming that they "play into the hands of" McCarthy or the Hearst press. If the old double standard has made a comeback, it remains more modulated than in the past. Actually, today's typical progressive has little disposition to deny or even excuse the worst about Soviet totalitarianism; his or her eagerness to change the subject to the sins of American "imperialism" and the petty right-wing dictators it supposedly keeps in power has its origins in hallowed memories of the campaign against the Vietnam War rather than in the Popular Front era. To be sure, the final political judgments are often much the same.

Anyway, O'Neill is no neoconservative. "Although the old left deserved to fail," he writes,

> we do need a left wing of the proper kind. A left rooted in anti-Americanism and dedicated to the interests of foreign countries, which is what we have had for most of the last half century or so, benefits no one, not even itself.

He goes on to remark: "That the Michael Harringtons and Irving Howes are so few is a problem that has defied the best efforts of socialists since World War I." I fully concur, although I have doubts as to whether "socialism" is salvageable as an inspiriting name for the goals of a democratic left that refuses to regard a realistic foreign policy as irredeemably wicked.

THE CENTERPIECE of the continuing debate over the past, cited by all engaged in it, is Lillian Hellman's apology for her Stalinist youth: "Whatever our mistakes, I do not believe we did our country any harm. And I think they [the anti-Stalinist intellectuals] did." O'Neill argues to the contrary that the silence about their political allegiances, celebrated as heroism by Hellman and Victor Navasky in *Naming Names*, lent credence to the mistaken belief—a belief on which McCarthyism fed—that a vast secret Communist movement was at work in the country. (That American Stalinists were of little value to Stalin and had no real influence on American foreign policy, his entire book makes plain.) More sweepingly, he challenges the second part of Hellman's claim in insisting that

> Had *The Nation, The New Republic, Common Sense, Partisan Review,* the *New Leader, Commentary* and all who wrote for them never existed, history would have turned out the same. American intellectuals played minor roles.

This is true, I think, although I'm not sure it applies so fully to the period since the Eisenhower Administration.

Yet Hellman's statement requires more direct confrontation, for it possesses a prima facie plausibility in arguing that support for distant evils—"our mistakes," as she gently calls them—had lesser consequences than political stands that may have contributed to undesirable events at home. One answer, of course, suggested by O'Neill and others, is to point out that the lies and deceits practiced by Hellman and her friends in defense of a tyranny far worse than Ameri-

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can capitalism did enormous harm to chances of building a durable movement of the left in the United States, a harm that was perpetuated by the short-lived new left that embraced new versions of the old delusions.

But this counterargument, though I agree with it, remains too one-sided and partisan: the United States is more than a political arena for the struggle between left and right. The Hellman claim that anti-Stalinist liberalism contributed, even if unwittingly, to McCarthyism, the Vietnam War, and Nixon's Presidency is thoroughly disingenuous. It singles out what all liberals—and not a few conservatives—now agree were excesses, unpleasant side effects, and disastrous blunders of the cold war, yet avoids the crucial question of the growth of Soviet power and American postwar resistance to it. Why not charge the anti-Stalinist liberals with responsibility for the Marshall Plan, the Berlin blockade, the NATO alliance, the defense of South Korea and, for that matter, the post-Sputnik funding of higher education and the eventual opening to China? That would require a facing up to the really important choices of recent history that cannot be reduced to the self-righteous posturing that so often makes intellectuals look vain and ridiculous when they dabble in politics.

A signal virtue of O'Neill's book is that he never forgets his subject is the politics of intellectuals. The sickness of intellectuals on the left, from which many still suffer, has roots in the fixed belief that their role as intellectuals is *defined* by the obligation to be ceaseless critics of their own society, by their *choice* of "alienation" rather than the true experience of it as social fate. It is no cure, however, if they transform themselves into celebrants of America and capitalism in the manner of contemporary neoconservatives; that is merely a different, if rarer, outcropping of the same disease. The obligation specific to the intellectual's calling is to strive to tell the truth whether it hurts or helps the forces of left or right, one's own nation or its enemies. This may indeed result in an alienation that is honorable. "Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood," wrote the great poet whom I quoted at the beginning of this review. He meant much more by this than I do here, but I hope I do not profane his meaning by invoking it for more modest purposes.

"SO IT DEVELOPS that eight Peruvian journalists were jumped and killed by peasants who could not distinguish the journalists from leftist guerrillas. Come to think of it, we have the same problem ourselves."

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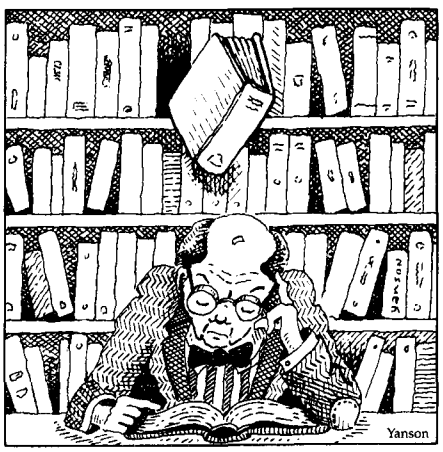
DENNIS WRONG

Dennis Wrong is a sociologist at New York University and a contributing editor of *Partisan Review*.

MYSTERIES

Raymond Chandler once remarked that the French critics took him seriously, reviewing his writing *as* writing, while the Americans always wanted to see how he had dealt with the "criminal milieu." Jean-Paul Sartre proved his point when he said that while he knew he ought to be



reading Wittgenstein, he preferred detective fiction. Now two Italian writers, Stefano Benvenuti and Gianni Rizzoni, have shown the same good judgment as the French, in *The Whodunit: An Informal History of Detective Fiction* (Collier Books; Collier Macmillan, $8.95). Unattractively packaged as it is, too many readers may decide to give this book a miss, which would be unfortunate, for it is perceptive, thorough, and especially informative on French authors who are little known in the United States. There are illustrations, and despite the usual miscellany of tangential information that books of this type attract like lint, there is a core of good judgment and rigorous selection that should make this precisely the book to give to the crime addict. (It would appear that a section was added especially for the American edition, for Edward D. Hoch has written a final chapter, properly called "A Report on the Current Scene," which is out of tone with the rest of the book—a hodgepodge of authors and imprecise judgments; one feels this usually crisp writer was given a list of Americans who had to be wedged in somehow and simply went at them chronologically.)

Ritchie Perry has been moving up fast to join the ranks of Fleming, Lyall, Begley, et al. (though Benvenuti, Rizzoni, and Hoch have not noticed him yet), and in *Fool's Mate* (Pantheon, $10.95) he has given us his best book. Perry's series figure is one Philis, who works for one of those top-secret British intelligence agencies that (at least in fiction) always keep the operative in the dark as part of the game. Suspension of disbelief over this approach to plot becomes ever more unwilling, though this substantial reservation aside, Philis's latest assignment is particularly intriguing. It is to help a beautiful Ugandan, who has been Idi Amin's mistress, escape to Britain, while a variety of thugs—French, Ugandan, miscellaneous—try to prevent the escape. This is John Buchan country, and Perry even adheres to the formula closely enough to provide only the sex that actually helps the plot.

There is an interesting group of mystery writers based in Boston, and some of them share Perry's sense of place—in their case the grime of Massachusetts. Lawrence Treat, Helen McCloy, George V. Higgins, Robert Parker, Gregory McDonald, and Jane Langton come quickly to mind, and the last two have new books out: indeed, McDonald has two, one for each of his series figures, Fletch the flip reporter, and Flynn the mock-morose Irish policeman. In *Fletch and the Widow Bradley* (Warner, $2.95) McDonald provides a solution seldom encountered in detective fiction, and not all readers will be pleased, though it works. Along the way McDonald has quite a bit to say, most of it terse, about human attitudes toward work, sexuality, the role of women in modern society, and the nature of business ethics. The central situation is original enough: Fletch is fired from his newspaper because he prints a story quoting memoranda signed by a man who, it turns out, has been (or appears to have been) dead for months.

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Fletch is determined to check his sources and find out how he was misled. His route takes him to Mexico, Alaska, and places in between. There are two subplots, one involving his lively girl friend Moxie and the other Fletch's effort to return $25,000 he has found, but whose owner doesn't want to claim it.

McDonald's other book, *The Buck Passes Flynn* (Ballantine, $2.25), is much the darker statement, and one senses that the author has set out to make a rather bitter commentary on the American economy. Someone is leaving envelopes containing $100,000 on the doorsteps of every citizen of Ada, Texas, and Frampton, Massachusetts (clearly on Martha's Vineyard). Everyone in Ada leaves town, save for a drunken preacher and his wife; everyone in Frampton drives the tourists away and holes up. Flynn must find the source of the money and save the American economy, and his reflections on modern society, the role of "cash money" in times of inflation, and the power of America in shaping the world's economy, are bleak and to the point in the age of Reaganomics. Everything about the book is solid except for its title; McDonald must be the first writer of detective fiction to use the Laffer Curve as a clue.

Jane Langton uses the intimate landscapes of Concord and Lincoln, Massachusetts, with special care, and almost everything about her latest, *Natural Enemy* (Ticknor & Fields, $11.95), is just right. Ms. Langton provides her own illustrations, and her knowledge of human nature, natural science, and just how rapacious men may be for land and the houses on them in our present economy, seems a quiet echo of McDonald's Flynn. We know at the outset that Edward Heron has died because he was denied his medicine when suffering an asthmatic attack, and we know that Buddy Whipple is the man responsible. Professor Homer Kelly's nephew John, who comes to work as a summer handyman for Heron's two daughters, and who knows all about spiders and wasps, will eventually prove Whipple to be a New England incarnation of one of those land developers who will stop at virtually nothing to rape Florida's coastline, in the manner of John D. MacDonald. Along the way we meet several very real, attractive people, some equally real silly ones, and we are shown a wry, perceptive talent at its best.

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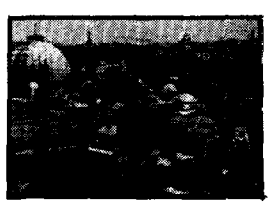

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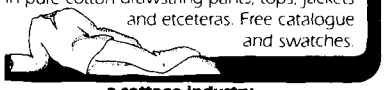

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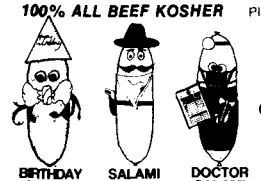

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West Berlin Diarist

City Limits

FIVE YEARS AGO, the youth of West Berlin charmed my American high school tour group. The students in the U-Bahn, the city's subway, wore the right number of sweater layers and a heavier clog than the Olaf Daughters we were used to at home. They rolled cigarettes in their laps without spilling tobacco, even when the train was moving. We were impressed by the erudition of the two German history students who, sitting on the grimy steps of our youth hostel, talked about Berlin's revolutionary tradition and promised to show us the spot where Rosa Luxemburg's assassins dumped her body. Along with postcards depicting East German guards glaring through the pillars of the Brandenburg Gate, I brought home a pair of black clogs and a black smock of my own.

WHEN I RETURNED to West Berlin last fall to study German history and literature, I realized it would be harder, psychologically, to fall in with German "alternative" life than I imagined when I was 16. Maybe it's because there are so many students here: according to a desperate plea for student apartments placed in *Der Tagesspiegel* by the student union's housing office, 90,000 people attend the Technical University, the Free University, the Hochschule der Künste, and the city's other institutions of higher learning. And maybe it's because to many Americans, Berlin students seem to have it so easy. Although for the most part they don't work terribly hard (many complete only one credit per semester), and although they pay no tuition, and although the government guarantees them monthly stipends if their parents cannot afford their living expenses, they still find reasons to boycott seminars or dominate them with rambling anti-authoritarian diatribes. They can also study as long as they want: nearly a quarter of the students on the suburban Dahlem campus of the Free University have been enrolled for eight years. Such differences make the afternoon cups of coffee at Luise's student café not quite the occasion for cultural exchange the Fulbright Commission presumably envisioned. Instead of hearing a German student's ideas about T. Adorno's *Negative Dialectic*, the American who ardently believes in the welfare state finds himself circling the "x" where the supply curve crosses the demand curve in the graph he has drawn on the back of a Schoefferhofer Weizen beer coaster, illustrating the way some Americans (not he) would explain Berlin's acute housing shortage. Or cringing inwardly each time the German student mentions Costa-Gavras's film *Missing*—which depicts America's alleged involvement in the Chilean coup, and was so popular here it played all fall—because he knows the German will comment that it seems surprising that such an accurate film wasn't censored by the American government.

FLEEING SUCH problematic encounters, some newly arrived Americans spend much of their free time with each other in the quiet halls of Berlin's numerous museums. Since the erection of the Wall twenty-one years ago, the government has spent a great deal of money to ensure that West Berlin's three-quarters of "The Four Power City," as the D.J.s on the U.S. Army's radio station sometimes still call it, are as culturally impressive as the whole city was before the division. Inside the Bauhaus Archive, around the corner from the display of Breuer's tubular chrome chairs, lie Walter Gropius's architectural plans. Most Berliners, having had to live in or with the projects inspired by Bauhaus architecture, are less enthusiastic than Americans about the style. To the north and south of the museum stand the massive concrete block apartment fortresses of the Maerkisches Viertel and Gropiusstadt, two Bauhaus legacies. Erected quickly to house the war's homeless, neither has aged well, and both suffer higher crime rates than older parts of the city. Nearer by, in the working-class districts of Kreuzberg and Wedding, are developments built on a smaller scale but no more successfully. Property tax laws, which make new construction more attractive than preservation, have led investors to raze many of the old *Mietskasernen* (tenements) left untouched by Allied bombs and to build expensive new apartments. To many Berliners—of whom the squatters are only the most vociferous—such construction represents yet another assault on their city's face. I have heard more than one native refer to Berlin as "our ugly town."

ALTHOUGH TO ME West Berlin doesn't feel like an island, Berliners frequently offer to show me its borders. One drove me north to Luebars, where the Wall makes its way through planted fields. On a visit to Schloss Glienecke, a German friend and I drank tea and squinted out at the barbed-wire fence running through the middle of the broad, blue Havel River. Like almost all the Germans I've asked, he said he thought the American troops here behaved pretty well, but on the way back into town he insisted we make one stop. We stared through another fence at a huge expanse of mown green. "The U.S. Army golf course," he observed, trying to provoke me, "is off limits for Germans." Berlin has been occupied for all of his life, and he will soon turn 37.

ONE RECENT SATURDAY afternoon I walked unexpectedly into the smallest and cheeriest of the numerous student demonstrations I have encountered in West Berlin. The hundred or so demonstrators and several dozen policemen were grouped around a woman talking into a loudspeaker at the center of the square. She was giving a pep talk to the squatters. While she spoke, others passed out fliers announcing a sit-in to protest the clearance of trees for a new highway to be built between Tegel, Berlin's large international airport, and the northern border of the city. "Little time remains," said a man who had taken over the loudspeaker, and likened the construction to other "monster projects of a profiteering minority," which, to the squatters, seems to represent all the evils of Western capitalism. "Yet another improvement for the divided city," he added sarcastically. I disagree with his oversimplification, and I deplore his lack of perspective (East Berlin, after all, has the ugliness without the demonstrations). But I'm beginning to understand the impatience of those who daily hear the hymns to the West sung by the city's visitors. It's harder to live in a symbol than to perceive one.

Amity Shlaes

Amity Shlaes, a former TNR reporter-researcher, is studying in West Berlin on a German Academic Exchange Service fellowship.

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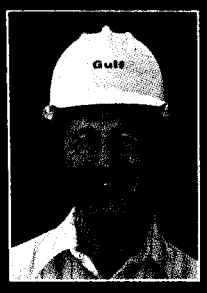

"There are still huge reserves of American oil left behind in oil fields that were tapped thirty or forty years ago," says Gulf Area Engineer John Shamburger. "In those days, crude was only two or three dollars a barrel, so we would operate an oil well only as long as the oil could be pumped up easily and inexpensively. It made more sense to drill new wells than to squeeze every drop out of old ones."

"In many of these old wells, the underground pressure is so low that the oil won't come up without some extra help. The extra help is called tertiary recovery, and it's a whole technology in itself. Here at Heidelberg, Mississippi, we started experimenting with it in 1971.

"One way to build up underground pressure is to set fire to some of the oil deep in the earth. That's called fire-flooding. It drives the rest of the oil toward the well, where it can be pumped to the surface. The improvement can be pretty dramatic; in one case, production increased from one hundred to 2300 barrels per day.

"In other parts of the country, with different geology, we might use water, steam, or chemicals to get the oil flowing."

All over America, Gulf is using one or another of these technologies to get more oil out of old wells. It isn't cheap and it isn't easy, but it is a certain source of made-in-America energy for tomorrow.

Gulf

Gulf people: energy for tomorrow.

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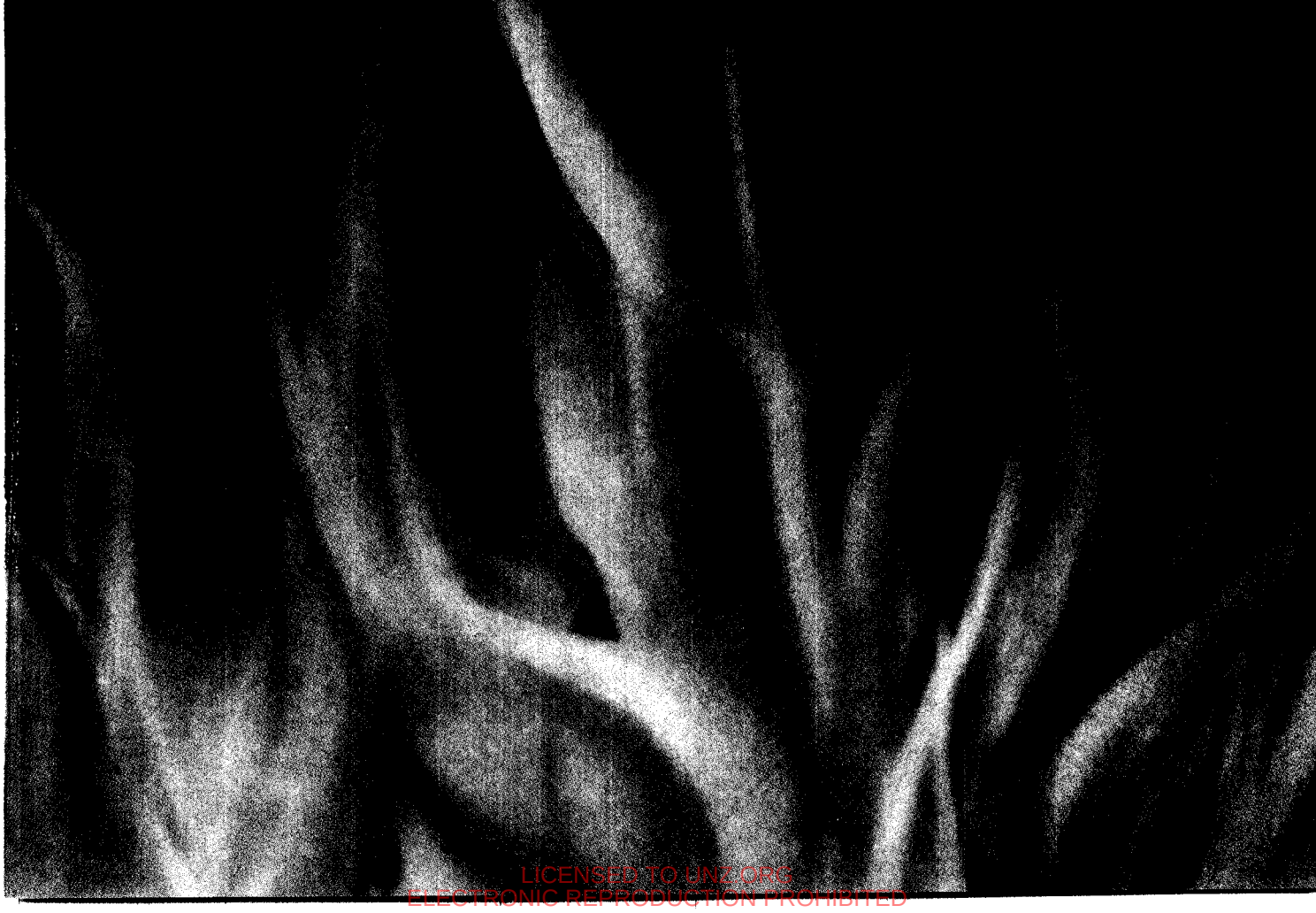
"Gulf's underground heat treatment gets more oil from old oil wells."



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